

THE NEW

LIBRARY

OF THE

INTRODUCTION.

I.

ALL eyes would be turned towards Mr. Gladstone's letter in these pages had that communication not been made public already. As we are celebrating the Jubilee of the Queen, it is interesting to reflect that there are two families which may be said to have lived for many years more than all others in the sight of the British people. We have no example, I believe, in our history, of the family of a citizen which has dwelt so largely, so simply, and so honourably before all the nation as the Gladstone family. No wonder with his heavy

years upon him, the late Prime Minister should seek more and more the rural repose and homely pleasures of such a family! But some ungenerous and wicked persons have already rejoiced in the public street over the epistle of our aged and venerable leader, in which their little, vulgar, and hasty minds have seen an opening for their own delayed performance to slip upon the political stage. Heaven knows, measuring their tiny souls, what a thin crack in the door could admit this troupe of performers, with all its effects and properties; but even this thin opening we must stuff up.

By the confession of all, what is it that keeps beyond all other causes a certain handful of men from union with the majority of Liberals? The Irish Question. And it is to that Irish Question, Mr. Gladstone, the leader of the Liberal Party, announces to us in solemn language, his high resolve to consecrate his last public breath and strength. Woe, therefore,

unto these mockers and laughers, let them go to and howl ; for, in that grave and noble resolve of the greatest statesman, the most commanding political genius and experience, the most powerful personal embodiment in this country, shaken with years though he be, they have arrayed against them in dire and mortal combat a force which is certain to overwhelm them with confusion and disaster. And behind Mr. Gladstone stands the Liberal Party, every man of it with hand on his sword, resolved and ready.

Does any one talk of retreat, of surrender, of concessions ? Let him read the words in this book of Mr. Jacob Bright, or of the Hon. Walter James ; let him read every page, and then tell us if in the face of one letter he can read the countenance of a deserter, or find the ill shape of a coward.

Concessions ! What authority has any one to make them, or if made, what advantage

should we gain by them? Either these concessions would be sanctioned by the Irish people or they would not. If the former, every one knows they would not be concessions at all—if the latter, every sagacious man sees that instead of advantage to us, these concessions would drive the Irish Party over to the Tories, and that we should exchange a solid and courageous band of eighty-five men for a divided, half-hearted, rebellious crew of seventy, all hands told. Not only should we not be able to turn the Tories out of office, but the people would turn us out of the country, the betrayers of our cause and the cause of the whole world.

Concessions! Who would surrender, for the sake of a re-union which would not last twenty-four hours, all the great principles and all the vast experience of twenty-four centuries, which have taught—if they have taught us anything—that patriotism is the strongest affection and

national liberty the deepest passion ; and both the most natural and the most simple and most powerful sentiment which, up to the present time, which have swayed the human bosom or governed the human race.

With all these arrayed behind us, who would surrender to a small group of men, whose experience and principles were only born yesterday, and whose present opinions and present sentiments will vanish as a cloud to-morrow ?

And the very arguments—tongs and shovel—by which the Unionist would put out the fire of liberty in Ireland, are heated and sharpened by the fire and on the anvil of the very principle of patriotism which they would smother in Ireland. Without this principle of national liberty, the Liberal Party would have no foundation, and is a doomed soul whirling down the bottomless pit.

II.

The Irish cause, therefore, still stands like a mountain among lofty hills, and if in this book these hills come well into view, they cannot at the present time overshadow the commanding proportions of that mountain. But these hills are homely and natural features in our English landscapes. The eyes of the greatest of us may get tired with looking only at one object, magnificent and inspiring though it be. In the *New Liberal Programme*, therefore, we have an extended view, which brings before the eye of the observer many features of country which are dear to him as a reformer. There is that old and familiar object the Land Question ; there is that ancient and crumbling institution the House of Lords. And many other spots of interest in our country are portrayed with much colour and boldness of out-

line, and it is believed, on the whole, with a faithful brush, in these pages.

When we find that the Unionists are making forced marches into our own territory, it has become our imperative duty to occupy as quickly as possible those bold passes and natural situations which place us beyond their reach, and our army in command of the whole country when the next great struggle comes. The Irish Question is a great cause, but it is the evident policy of the Tories to drive us in domestic reform as far back as possible. We should let them exhaust themselves by their rapid marches—pass all the good measures they bring forward as quickly as those measures come in—and then we shall front them on bold and lofty ground, from which we can sweep down upon them and drive them from the plains.

While the Unionists are heavily engaged at Westminster in maintaining the supremacy of

Parliament and the union of the Unionists, let us who have no union to maintain because it is firmly established—the union between us and the Irish people ; no supremacy to maintain because it is beyond any party to endanger it—the supremacy of the People ; let us who have no such ticklish business on hand, who have no Government to keep in office, no Cabinet meetings to attend, no public departments to manage, no questions in the House of Commons which we can greatly help ; go to the people, argue our cause by night and by day ; let no man and no woman be silent—yea, let no child whose face is pale and whose little stomach is empty be silent ; let exiled families over the seas and evicted families over the Channel ; let families in garrets and children in gutters ; let strong men out of work and weak women with their babes ; let the little child and the gray-haired old man—yea, let the very stones, the deserted villages, the ruined homesteads, the

Oct 15, 26

My dear Sir,

I am obliged to make
an answer to your kind
letter which I fear will dis-
appoint you. My friends
forget my years. I held on
to politics in the hope of possibly
helping to settle the Irish
question, but the general op-
inions both of party and of
particular subjects I am

Obliged, & intend, to leave
in the hands of others

With all good wishes to
the literary cause I remain

Yours respectfully

W. L. G.

And. Reid Esq

NEW LIBERAL PROGRAMME.

HENRY LABOUCHERE, M.P.

I GATHER that you wish me to state : (1) why the Liberal Party was defeated at the last General Election ; (2) what it ought to do in order to win at the next General Election.

My answer is, that the loss was due to the Party having had neither a good organisation nor a good programme, and that if it wants to win, it must have both.

The Last Election.—The Liberal Party was not sufficiently liberal. An appeal was made to the masses against the classes. But what were the masses asked to do ? To give Home Rule to Ireland. This issue was prejudiced by being accompanied by a proposal to buy out Irish landlords by means of an Imperial guarantee. The masses have no objection to

the Irish being granted a domestic Legislature; on the contrary, they think it reasonable that the Irish should manage their own affairs, and they would be glad to effect in this way a settlement of a question which blocks the way, but they have no love for landlords, either in England or in Ireland, and their common sense tells them that it is more advantageous to vendors than to purchasers to buy on a falling market. Moreover, whilst ready to do justice to Ireland, they desire that their claims to justice should also be recognised.

There was consequently an absence of enthusiasm. The masses were appealed to, but not properly appealed to. I do not believe that we lost many votes owing to the hostile attitude of Lord Hartington and of Mr. Chamberlain. The influence of both of these gentlemen has been greatly exaggerated. Lord Hartington is the leader of the Whigs. They have long been powerful in Parliament because they have had a considerable amount of administrative ability, which has been due to the system of giving youthful Whigs some insignificant post in the Administration, from which they imperceptibly creep up, until they

eventually reach the Cabinet. Even in Parliament their influence, however, is a diminishing quantity, whilst in the country they are powerless, because they have very few followers in the constituencies, most of their former adherents having already gone over to the Tories. Mr. Chamberlain has no personal following outside Birmingham. He is a man of ability, shrewd, pushing, and a clear and incisive speaker. But his force consisted in his being regarded as the standard-bearer of the advanced Liberals. He followed, rather than led, public opinion. When he called in the Tories to aid him to coerce to his will the Liberal host, and then, later on, declared Lord Hartington to be his leader, all confidence in him disappeared, and it was felt that the standard must be confided to safer hands. Lord Randolph Churchill said, with questionable taste, that Mr. Gladstone is an "old man in a hurry." It may with more truth be said that Mr. Chamberlain is "a young man in a hurry." He could not wait until the mantle fell to him, but sought to tear it from Mr. Gladstone's shoulders. By the secession of the "Liberal Unionists," however, our organisation, which had been mainly in their

hands, and which for long had been very defective, was thrown entirely out of gear.

Organisation.—This should be our first step. When Lord Richard Grosvenor was the chief Whip of the Party, its official organisation was Whig. Lord Richard was of the old school. He utterly ignored local associations, for he feared their Radicalism. The Party consisted, according to him, of Whigs, and of placemen who would bow the knee to them. The electors were mere pawns in the game, which was played between two rival gangs of the aristocracy, with office as the stakes. The business of the Liberal constituencies, and of those whom they chose as their representatives, was to put in power, and to retain in power, a number of gentlemen labelled Liberals. In Liberal Administrations the Whigs were always the dominant element. They openly declared that they remained with us in order to restrain us, or, in other words, to have their way and to prevent us from having ours. In every Party there are a considerable number of men who are, before everything else, placemen. When an advanced Liberal wants a place, he has generally found it his most practical course to

let it be known that, whatever principles he may profess, he is ready to pocket them, or to relegate them to the category of pious opinions, if he obtain the object of his ambition. No sooner is he the member of an Administration than he subsides into a "live and let live" arrangement with the Whigs. Experience has shown that the effect of the "Queen's shilling" upon advanced Liberals is generally baneful. What policy a Liberal Government shall pursue becomes a secondary consideration to the placeman ; the first is, that there shall be a Liberal Government, and that he shall be in it. The means thus becomes the end, and this is likely to continue until our placemen (a very respectable and useful class in their way) are brought to realise that without adhering to Liberal principles there is no hope of Liberal place.

By the side of the official organisation in Parliament Street there was the National Liberal Federation. This Federation is based upon the sound principle that the programme of the Party should emanate from the Party. The Federation has somewhat suffered from having been regarded as being too much under

the influence of Birmingham. Just before the election Mr. Chamberlain and his Birmingham associates seceded from it, having found that they could not make it their instrument to shatter the Party to which they had professed allegiance. These secessions, whilst in the end they will strengthen the Federation, undoubtedly warped its usefulness at the election.

Against these disadvantages we had the name and the popularity of Mr. Gladstone. These were a tower of strength, but they were not enough to carry the country. I sincerely trust that Mr. Gladstone will remain our leader for many a year. But we must look facts in the face. He is not immortal, nor have we, just now, any one else whose name would exercise such an influence as his. We must therefore substitute a programme for a name. The Party must be the programme, and the programme must be the Party. The programme must be the outcome of the collective opinion of Liberals. The time has gone by when politics were merely a dispute between Capulets and Montagues. Each individual Liberal elector should have a hand in shaping it. Our leaders must be

executive officers charged with the task of giving effect to the popular mandate. All impulse must come from below, it will never come from above. The corner-stone of democracy is that the wisdom of all is superior to that of a few.

The National Liberal Federation exists. It has already done good work. All Liberals should therefore rally to it. All Liberal Associations should at once join it. Its meetings of delegates should become the Liberal Parliament. Their decisions should be recognised as the Athanasian Creed of the Liberal Party. Its officers, elected by a popular vote, should be to the Liberal Parliament what the Executive is to the Imperial Parliament. When the Liberals are in power, Ministers should be but the Parliamentary Committee of the Federation. It will be said that this is crushing out all individual thought. I would leave to every individual the right to think as he pleases. He may, by speeches, by pamphlets, and by newspaper articles, urge the Party to adopt whatever policy he likes. In this way he may influence the decisions of the Party. When, however, that decision is formed, he must accept it, or be

ruled out of the Party. This seems to me to be involved in the very idea of Party, which is the union of a number of persons ready to subordinate minor differences to the necessity of united action. The scope and the direction of that united action must be decided by the majority, and not by the minority. The force of united action is fully understood by the classes, and it is due to their understanding it, and to their acting upon it, that they are powerful. They are an army. We are a mob, at one moment snapping and snarling at each other, at another mere sheep led into by-ways by doubtful shepherds. Without organisation, and without subordination of all to the collective decisions of the majority, success is impossible. We shall wander in the desert for many a year, and when we emerge from it our Promised Land will be but a mirage.

The Central Council of the N.L.F. ought to be in London. The entire country should be mapped out in districts. In the centre of each district there ought to be a district council, elected by the local associations. The district council should have its officers and its meetings. It should see to the organisation of the district,

take care that Registration is kept up, that there should be frequent local meetings, that Parliamentary candidates pledged to the programme of the Federation should alone obtain the support of its members, and keep the district in touch with the central London council. Each year, as at present, there ought to be a general meeting of the Federation, composed of delegates from all the local associations. At this the programme of the Federation should be settled, and the central council elected. Thus we should obtain united action, whilst no individual could complain that he is ignored, for every committee, official, and delegate, would owe his existence to popular election.

The Whips of the Party should be in intimate relation with the central office of the N.L.F., but they should not act independently of it.

Programme.—This, as I have already said, should be adopted at the annual meeting of the N.L.F. What I should like to see is something of this nature.

1. *Ireland.* The establishment of a domestic Legislature in Ireland, with a domestic Execu-

tive deriving from this Legislature. The said Legislature to be paramount in all local matters within its scope. Irish representatives to sit and vote in the Imperial Parliament only when Imperial issues are under discussion. No scheme of land purchase based upon any burthen or obligation being imposed upon the Imperial taxpayer.

2. *Taxation.* The free breakfast-table. All duties upon tea and coffee to be abolished. A progressive income-tax. A distinction of incidence between incomes derived from interest upon accumulations, and from trade and the exercise of a profession. A progressive succession duty.

3. *The Church.* The Disendowment and Disestablishment of the Established Church in England, Wales, and Scotland, to be recognised as our ultimate object. The Disendowment and Disestablishment of the Church in Wales to be immediate. The funds of the Disestablished Church (after full recognition of the private endowments of the last fifty years, and of the vested rights of the living) to be devoted to educational purposes.

4. *Land.* The right of every parish to

purchase land at actual value, and to lease or sell it to small occupiers. This right I would give to parishes in Ireland as well as in Great Britain. The price paid ought to be in bonds bearing three per cent. interest, and secured upon the rates of the parish. A right vested in the leaseholder to become a freeholder, whether in town or in country. The obligation of all Associations, Trusts, &c., to sell their land, and to vest the proceeds in public securities. Abolition of all entails. The recognition of fixity of tenure in the occupier, and of his proprietary rights in any improvements paid for by him. A Court of Appeal in every county, which would have the right to fix or alter rents, in such a way that the ability of the occupier to live and thrive, and to obtain interest upon cost of improvements made by himself, would be the first charge upon the annual produce of his land, and the rent of the landlord the second charge. Confiscation to the State of all lands owned by private individuals which might be cultivated, but which are not, and which are not part of the amenities of residence.

5. *The Legislature.* The abolition of all

hereditary rights to legislate. Personally, I see no advantage in two Legislative Chambers. Some Liberals, however, do. But whether there be one, or whether there be two, no right should be recognised to sit in either, except that derived from popular election. The existing Upper House consists of hereditary legislators, belonging to the class of great landowners. The vast majority of them are Conservatives in the real sense of the word, and most of them in the Party sense. They have during the present century opposed, weakened, and emasculated all progressive legislation. When the Conservatives are in power, the Lords are useless; when the Liberals are in power the Lords are an active evil. To allow them to retain their prerogatives is as absurd as it would be to submit all legislation to the Carlton Club; indeed, they are the Carlton Club to all intents and purposes. Whenever an important measure is before them, a meeting of the Conservative Party is called at that Club, and they receive a mandate to act in accordance with the views of the meeting—a mandate which they submissively and invariably obey.

A thorough revision of the Registration laws, making registration, so far as is possible, self-acting, and reducing the term of residence to qualify for a vote. This reduction might be to three months, and any one who can show (whether lodger or householder) his receipts for payment of rent during the previous three months of the house or room that he is actually occupying, ought to be placed on the register.

Payment of members, and the relief of Parliamentary candidates from the official costs of being a candidate. These should be thrown upon the rates.

The above are only a few of the reforms that are needed, but they are important ones, and if carried would be most beneficial. I believe that the vast majority of Liberals throughout the country are in favour of them. If they constituted our programme, we should, at least, have something to fight for. The masses would perceive that their aspirations are recognised, and that it is no longer sought to use them to further the ambition of the few. The divorce between the masses and the classes would be definite, and it is most unlikely that the former would any longer allow

themselves to be cajoled by the contemptible trash talked by Primrose Knights and Dames, or that they would forego their birthright for the sake of the free teas, the conjurors, the rope-dancers, the fireworks, and the comic singers, which are provided for them at Primrose League and Conservative "*fêtes*." They would soon perceive that democratic institutions cannot be worked by aristocratic machinery, or by aristocratic workmen. The total annual sum expended upon those who have what are termed "Ministerial appointments" is about 160,000*l*. Of this 110,000*l*. is absorbed, under the present Government, by Peers and Peers' sons. Comment is useless. If we are to become a democracy in reality as well as in name, not only must the electors be democratic, but Parliament must be, and the Executive must be.

I have used throughout the word "Liberal" as the name of our Party. I have done so because the vast majority of Liberals are now Radicals. I see no reason therefore why we should surrender our trade mark.

I am aware that it is suggested by some that we ought to acknowledge, in dust and ashes, that

we have been in error in our Irish policy, in order that we may again obtain the patronage of the "illustrious families" of Cavendish and Chamberlain; indeed, in a *quasi*-official manifesto of the "Unionists," which appeared recently in the *Fortnightly Review*, we were told that, if we did not, the Conservatives would remain in power for untold years; whilst of the 1,300,000 electors who voted for Home Rule, above one million were dubbed fools, and the greater number of those whom they sent to Parliament to represent them were, we were informed, greedy aspirants to office. It was contended, therefore, that the Liberal electors would not long persevere in their folly, and that their representatives would not long maintain a course which was not likely to secure to them the object of their ambition. Conclusions drawn from such assumptions are not likely to prove correct. On the other hand, were we (believing as we do in Home Rule) to surrender our opinions at the bidding of the so-called "Unionists," and under the menace of their voting for the Conservatives until we do, we should recognise that any small minority of Liberals may henceforth

impose their will upon the majority by calling on the Conservatives to aid them. Anything more degrading, or, indeed, more fatal to the future of a Party, cannot be conceived. If Lord Hartington and his friends are willing to accept our programme, we should welcome them into our ranks like any other of our fellow citizens. If Mr. Chamberlain and his following of relatives and Birmingham Town Councillors would make use of the door of the repentant sinners, we would not slam it in their faces. We object to dictators, and especially to dictators with our enemies at their back to aid them in establishing a dictatorship over us. But we are ready to forgive and to forget, and to receive with open arms all those who are ready to work for us, no matter how much of late they may have worked against us. What I am certain that the Liberal Party will never admit is, that it is to accept the rule of the Conservatives, because a few gentlemen formerly connected with it cannot have their way. When these gentlemen tell us that we shall never have a majority without them, they strangely exaggerate their influence with the electorates. Their secession on the eve of a

battle, caused some disorganisation, and this, together with the other causes which I have indicated, led to our defeat. But we are now forewarned, and we must be forearmed. They will find that exceedingly few Liberal electors will support them in a course which is avowedly intended to insure the defeat of the Liberal Party, nor is it likely that we shall admit their contention that all Liberal electors who disagree with them are fools, and that all Liberals sent to Parliament by these fools are knaves.

HENRY LABOUCHERE.

JACOB BRIGHT, M.P.

No one can doubt why the Liberal Party was defeated at the last election. A simple statement of the facts gives the explanation. A great question was placed before the electors for which they were not prepared, and influential Liberal politicians, being hostile to this question, separated themselves from the Party and joined our opponents.

This division in the Liberal Party has given the Tories office. Such a state of things is not uncommon in this country, so the result is almost always advantageous. Liberal disunion generally arises from the fact that a portion of the Party does not understand the principles of the Party, or has not the courage to apply them. To be in opposition, to suffer adversity, does much to teach and strengthen. The present defeat will probably have this result. WE HAVE TO LEARN, IT SEEMS TO ME, IN THE LIGHT OF

THIS IRISH QUESTION, THAT THE BROAD AND DISTINGUISHING PRINCIPLE OF THE LIBERAL PARTY IS THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE BY THE PEOPLE—THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE BY THEIR OWN CONSENT. IF LIBERALS SURRENDER THIS PRINCIPLE, or are afraid to acknowledge it and to act upon it; if they compel the people to be despotically ruled, then PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION IS USELESS, AND HAD BETTER BE LAID ASIDE. The acknowledgment of this cardinal principle of the Liberal Party by the late Government has wrought a remarkable change in the relations between this country and Ireland. We have made peace and have become friends, not by a weak surrender, as some have said, of that which honour required us to maintain, but by a just concession of that which wisdom and conscience compelled us to yield.

JACOB BRIGHT.

EARL OF ABERDEEN.

IF there is to be a new Liberal Party, it will, I apprehend, be new only in outward form and method. The fundamental principles which have guided the party to usefulness in the past, will, I trust, remain. For the same reason I do not believe in a permanent split in the party. True Liberals are actuated in the main by the same motives and ideas. The present estrangement is due to a difference as to ways and means. We are at the same time passing through a testing process which for the moment has inevitably thrown the machine out of gear, but after emerging from this experience the party as a whole may find itself in a healthier condition than before.

What gives, in my opinion, more cause for anxiety is the attractiveness to many minds of a method and tactics which, though brilliant and often for a time successful in a party sense, are not

carried on with any necessary dependence upon those principles of fairness and consistency which are professedly accepted as guiding our political action. I refer to such methods as have given rise to the expression "the game of politics." Fortunately there are indications that THE DEMOCRACY will in the main regard the matter with THAT SERIOUSNESS AND SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY WHICH WILL LEAD THEM TO REQUIRE EVIDENCE OF HIGH CHARACTER AND MOTIVE, AS WELL AS ABILITY, ON THE PART OF THEIR POLITICAL LEADERS.

ABERDEEN.

LORD THURLOW.

No one can serve two masters. You cannot serve Demos and Lord Randolph Churchill, THEREFORE WHAT ARE CALLED UNIONIST LIBERALS ARE DOOMED TO FAILURE, but only as regards Irish policy. On all other points they are sound as a bell, and their pronouncements retain the right ring. I have said "Unionist Liberals" to denote who I mean, but the term is most misleading, and lost us the last election. We are *all* Unionists. The greatest Radical is an Englishman and a Unionist first, and what is termed a Home Ruler afterwards. What is Home Rule? It is what we have and appreciate in England. It is what they have and appreciate in every state of the great North American Union. It is what, to the dismay of his friends, old and new, Lord Randolph Churchill now promises for Ireland. Of course Ireland will have Home

Rule, Mr. Gladstone has made that a certainty, though by forcing the pace he broke up his party, and jeopardised his own political soul to secure it. But lovers' quarrels are soon made up, and domestic jars rapidly heal in well-regulated households. A few short months will see a rude awakening of the Tories from their dreams of a long lease of place and power, and will display to their astonished gaze the Liberal rank and file once more well in hand, commanded by its tried and victorious generals, and ready for the fray. What that fray will be we all know. The Government, founded on defections, will succumb to *union* of a widely different kind from their expectations. Ireland will get Home Rule from the original patentee of the article, stamped with the genuine trade mark, and not the fraudulent counterfeit and imitation of the Tories. The people of England do not believe in the efficacy of political death-bed repentances. The conversion to the new faith has been too sudden to be sincere. THE FOUNDATIONS ARE NOT BROAD OR DEEP ENOUGH TO SUSTAIN THE WONDERFUL EDIFICE DESIGNED BY THESE MACHIAVELLIAN ARCHITECTS. IT WILL TOPPLE OVER AND BURY ITS AUTHORS BENEATH

ITS SHATTERED FRAGMENTS AND ITS ILL-ASSORTED MATERIALS. But though Ireland will receive Home Rule she will *not* become an affiliated Republic. She will become a well-ordered province of a well-ordered empire, and the Emerald Isle will once more shine with due lustre as one of the brightest gems in the British Crown.

But after all, Ireland is not everything, and is really only troublesome in proportion as it is permitted to engross attention. Other and weightier matters demand legislation. WE HAVE LAND IN ENGLAND ALSO—BETTER LAND AND MORE OF IT—CRYING ALOUD FOR REDISTRIBUTION. WE WANT LEGISLATION FOR ENGLAND, AND WE INTEND TO HAVE IT.

Land, like man, cannot serve two masters. The time for multiple ownership has gone by. The landlord, probably a life renter or limited owner, possibly a copyholder of some manor, subject to fines if not imprisonments, fines on admission, fines for cutting timber, fines for dying, fines for everything, lets a farm to a moneyed tenant who secures good crops owing to the investment of capital, industry, and intelligence, rather than to the intrinsic qualities

of the soil itself. The shooting over the land is let over his head to some one else. Damage to the crops, sometimes wilful, sometimes unavoidable, is the necessary result. A farmer, moreover, does not like to see a pleasure-seeker, followed by gamekeepers and preceded by dogs, meandering at his own sweet will through his standing crops of uncut corn. Can you blame him? I do not say that this is the rule, but it is what frequently happens, and may occur to every tenant farmer. I say the presumption of the law should step in and prevent it. If the presumption of law can devise land, it should define and proclaim the abuses subject to which it should not be held. Single ownership is the simple remedy for nearly all of our political disorders. Give a man his land absolutely, with the birds that fly over it, and the earth beneath, and the waters, and I would add the minerals, under the earth. Let the land own one master, and let no man own more than he has capital to profitably use and occupy. Of course there are two schools in such things, Communism and Private Property. The former brings all down to one low dead level. I want, on the contrary, to place it in the power of

every able-bodied man to rise in the social scale. Give a man something to lose, and he will be less likely to desire to take by force what belongs to some one else. Therefore legislate so as to give a man a bit of the earth's crust, which is what he most covets—what lawyers call *real* property—give him that, and he will become a law-abiding citizen.

DO NOT BE SATISFIED WITH ALLOTMENTS. They are a snare and a delusion. They are better than nothing, and that is all that can be said for them. They are the homœopathic prescription of the Tory village quack. What we want are owners of land varying in acreage according to their means, absolute owners occupying their own land, peasant proprietors and yeomen, not serfs, bondsmen or tenants. Some tell you they would starve at the present prices of agricultural produce. That is not true, and moreover agricultural produce will rise in price, and with it the price of land will again rise, as sure as day follows night, and sooner than people imagine. Now is the time to make the change from multiple to single ownership, when land is cheap and a drug in the market. Our ablest statisticians calculate

that in twenty-five years America will require the lion's share of its own agricultural produce. This calculation is based on the growth of population continuously aided by steadily increasing emigration. But I believe two things. First, that emigration will lose its terrors with increased knowledge and increased necessity; that more people will more readily emigrate to join their friends who have gone out before them and prospered. Secondly, that the terrors of emigration will disappear with proper civilised appliances, an emigration office such as Lord Granville has had the courage to inaugurate, and the state aid which cannot now be long delayed. Then America is daily coming nearer. A very few years ago ten days was a short passage, now seven days is considered nothing extraordinary; and marine engines will undergo further improvement. It is only a question of time and improved boiler construction. Probably three days will be an average passage twenty years hence. So much for the probable emigration of the future, and its bearing on the population of America—which, I believe, has been greatly under-estimated.

Now let us consider the question of America's

agricultural production in the future. One point appears to have been overlooked. That, as homesteads spread out over the prairies, mixed farming will take the place of the vast plains of wheat or cereals, and of the almost boundless cattle ranches of the present day. The two will gradually intermingle as they have done in the eastern and central and older occupied states. Village life will spring up in Texas and Dakotah, and the cowboy will become as extinct as the buffalo or the Red Indian. Mixed farming to suit the altered circumstances will mean less wheat grown. Demands will arise for winter keep, turnips and hay will break the monotony of the western landscape. There will not only be more mouths to feed, but less grain grown to the square mile than at present. Besides all this, trade is reviving, freights will rise, and it will be found that everything will combine to bring grist to the mill of the English peasant proprietor of the now near future.

But there are other questions awaiting settlement—the question of free education, the House of Lords, the Established Church and many more, too many more to be dealt with in

a short paper of this description. It may, however, be safely prophesied that before another decade has gone by these three questions at least will have been settled by the voice of the people. Education will be free of fees in board schools. Our House of Lords or Senate will become elective, not *inter se* as in Scotland, but by the people, and on some franchise to be hereafter determined, and approved by the people themselves. The working bees will be elected, and the drones will be left out in the cold. Then as regards the Church. I have put this last as a question not yet ripe for treatment; no one can doubt, however, that the general spread of toleration among mankind will ere long break down the barriers which at present obstruct the calm consideration of the question. The Roman Catholic Emancipation, the removal of the Jewish disabilities, the deference shown to Quakers and other sectarians in courts of justice, and lastly, the admission of Mr. Bradlaugh to the House of Commons, are all straws to show which way the wind blows. In this matter those that run may read the signs of the times if they like. If they prefer, they may for the present bury their heads in the sand for a

few short years. All reformers incur odium at the time. In former days this odium took the shape of the stake and the rack and the thumb-screw, but that fact and all the terrors of the Inquisition could not quench the thirst for the abolition of superstitions and abuses. At the present day the odium of those to be reformed takes other, but sometimes more insidious, shapes ; it remains to be proved if they will be more effective than the weapons of the middle ages. Of this we may be sure, that plenty of work still remains for the Liberal Party to perform, and that it has heads and hands among it that will not shirk their duty.

THURLOW.

DUNPHAIL, N.B.

Oct. 11, 1886.

VISCOUNT KILCOURSIE, M.P.

THERE IS SOME REASON TO FEAR THAT LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL'S SPEECH AT DARTFORD, PROGRESSIVE AS IT UNDOUBTEDLY LOOKS, WILL LULL TO SLEEP A FEW LIBERALS who may think that much which it was hoped the late Government would do for the country, the Conservatives will do now if only they are given time and fair play.

A greater error could hardly be committed. Lord Randolph may sow, and possibly Mr. Matthews may water, but the Tory rank and file, even if cheered on by Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain, will hardly allow the bountiful harvest of Liberal measures promised to become law, WITHOUT A PROTEST WHICH IN ITSELF WILL CAUSE DELAY, AND DELAY WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE FATAL. THE FIRST DIFFICULTY WILL ARISE IN THE CABINET, THE SECOND AT THE CARLTON, THE THIRD IN THE COUNTRY

amongst the squires and parsons, and THE FOURTH IN THE LORDS. I purposely omit the Conservatives in the House of Commons from my list for the simple reason that if the Cabinet can be got to agree to any really thorough-going Liberal measure, the Tory members will come to the conclusion that there is much to be said for it, and vote as one man.

The independence of thought which manifests itself in hostile voting, such as was seen in June last amongst Liberals, is unknown in the opposite camp.

In the Lords, however, the utility of Mr. Chamberlain as an ally will not be so fully felt as in the Commons, and the bills sent there will hardly come out with that full flavour of Liberalism attached to them which Liberals would regard as necessary. An essentially Liberal measure carrying with it the aspect of finality could hardly pass the House of Lords as at present constituted.

The Liberals in the House of Commons who put statesmanship above placemanship will of course vote for any Liberal measure, no matter by whom brought forward, but even the enormous majority which could thus be found

would not prevent many amendments being put in by the Lords, which, if the Government accepted—and of course they would accept them—WOULD HAVE ALSO TO BE ACCEPTED BY MR. CHAMBERLAIN, ON PAIN OF TURNING THE GOVERNMENT OUT OF OFFICE.

It should never be forgotten that a thorough-going old-fashioned Tory minority in the Cabinet, even if outvoted there, will always have the Lords with them.

The Lords are now enormously powerful, both directly and indirectly, and EVEN LORD RANDOLPH WILL NOT INCLUDE THE REFORM OF THEIR HOUSE IN HIS PROGRAMME.

THE LORDS will be conscious further that if the glebe lands and the tithes are to be interfered with that they will always HAVE THE CHURCH BEHIND THEM, while if personality is to be further taxed to relieve the landlords, as promised by Lord Randolph in a pregnant sentence,¹ the whole of the professions and trades will be with them.

As regards the all-absorbing and ever-present

¹ He will introduce "a comprehensive rearrangement and readjustment of the incidence of local taxation by which personal property shall be brought more into the area of local taxation."

Irish question, Lord Randolph ONLY HOPES TO "LAY THE FOUNDATION" of popular local self-government; the superstructure is evidently left to the Liberals. The rumoured provincial councils will exactly accomplish this, and on this point our much desired Liberal reunion might take root and fructify.

For these reasons it is ALL-IMPORTANT FOR THE LIBERAL PARTY TO BE UP AND DOING. Liberal measures are for Liberal men to initiate, as they have done in many cases already, to introduce and to carry through with the hearty concurrence of the Party, which we hope will at the next election return them with a mandate for that purpose. In the meantime there is much to be done.

Mr. Labouchere, both by his letters and speeches, seems not only to expect much, but almost everything, from the National Federation. They are not only to formulate a political creed with pains and penalties attached, but the Liberal leader and all his advisers in and out of the coming Cabinet, are, I presume, to be the nominees of the National Liberal Federation.

Obviously the body to belong to is no longer

the House of Commons. This bygone and badly-worked institution is to be galvanised into real life by having all its Liberal members nominated by the Federation, and their votes regulated by that body.

I have some knowledge of the West of England, a little of the Midland Counties, and a little of West Scotland; and I have no hesitation in saying that if this is to be the case, not a single Liberal member will ever be returned for these districts again. The break up of the Birmingham Caucus has been a warning against a too rigid centralisation, and the lesson should be well learned.

The National Liberal Federation is an admirable body, admirably suited to collect information of prevailing and rising Liberal opinion, to formulate that opinion by express resolutions, and to assist in organisation wherever required and whenever applied to for assistance. With some diffidence, let me add, that I think they are ill suited to perform the duties of Mr. Gladstone and the leaders of the Party, in addition to those of the dogmatist and the chucker-out.

THE PROGRESSIVE PROGRAMME UPON WHICH

LIBERALS SEEM TO BE NEARLY ALL AGREED MAY, I THINK, BE SUMMED UP AS FOLLOWS:—

1. A radical reform of the constitution of the House of Lords.
2. Revision and simplification of Registration laws, and payment of all registration costs and sheriffs' fees by the borough, division, or county for which a member is returned. *Bona fide* residence by freeholder or tenant (provided his rent has been paid) during the last THREE MONTHS previous to registration as a voter, should be now deemed sufficient.
3. A graduated income-tax in a moderate form, the great fluctuations of trade being borne in mind, so that large trade capitalists may not be driven out of England.
4. Reform of land laws, simplification and economy in land transfer, and the nearest approach to absolute ownership and relief of trustees, both as regards real and personal property, which Parliament could be induced to pass, and a radical change in the laws of intestacy in regard to real property.
5. Creation of county boards (all members being triennially elected), having control

over beer, spirits, and tobacco, licensing, and local taxes of every description; with power, also, to purchase and let lands in small plots for the purposes of building cottages and letting or selling allotments or garden grounds to small tenants when required.

Many other questions will be considered ripe for settlement by enormous numbers of Liberals, but I have here mentioned a few upon which, I submit, almost all Liberals are agreed, and which certainly in themselves would give work for five or six years to come, even if Ireland and its difficulties were out of the way and a Liberal Government were in power.

With regard to Ireland, I fear I cannot dismiss this question in one paragraph.

The rejection of Mr. Parnell's bill, in addition to the threat that the closure of debate is henceforward to be carried by a bare majority of votes in the House, can hardly have a soothing effect upon the Irish nation, and if trouble of a serious nature should unfortunately be in store for us, no reasonable man will be astonished. The Irish question is the all-absorbing question of the hour; it

will be so during the autumn and winter, and will commence to develop probably in an aggravating and obstructive form early in the ensuing session. NOR CAN THERE BE REASONABLE HOPE THAT ANY MEASURE OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT, OR THE FORMATION OF FOUR PROVINCIAL COUNCILS, OR OTHER MODIFICATION OF HOME RULE, WHICH THE GOVERNMENT CAN POSSIBLY BRING FORWARD, any schemes for railway extension, the building of harbours, and the irrigation of rivers, or any modifications in the working of the Land Acts, would to any appreciable extent lessen the discontent which prevails over four-fifths of the Sister Isle.

The Irish will be wise to accept anything which is offered, but my humble opinion remains now what it was in June last, namely, THAT NOTHING SHORT OF AUTONOMY WILL SATISFY THE IRISH NATION, and give peace, in addition to the possibility of Parliamentary progress without Irish obstruction. The very continuance of simple statements of Irish grievances by Irish members, which, though not obstructive, will I fear occupy a very large amount of valuable time.

HOW IS THIS AUTONOMY TO BE OBTAINED AND PROGRESS MADE ?

Only, absolutely only, in one way—namely, by informing the English electors of the actual state of Irish feeling. The Welsh, the Scotch, and the English constituencies who returned Liberals at the last election do not require information.

How is information to be conveyed to the English Conservative boroughs and counties ?

I would suggest that the National Liberal Federation should take up this question, and I would further suggest that *two* persons from each Tory constituency should be sent by the Federation to Ireland for a month. That these persons should on their return state accurately what they have seen and honestly what their impression has been, both in regard to Irish feeling, Irish grievances—supposed or real—and if in any way the granting of Irish autonomy would tend to disintegrate the Empire or the reverse. I have no doubt of their verdict. Men of intelligence and open mind should alone be sent, and a subscription started to pay their expenses. The agents of the Loyal and Patriotic Union, as well as the agents of the National League,

should be invited to give their information, and they should mix freely with the inhabitants. The amount of information thus gained and distributed in useful quarters would be simply invaluable. Pamphlets are not useless, but even in exciting times when an election is near at hand only an infinitesimal proportion of them are read at all, and the few that are read, unless written by some very well known man, either in the locality or the country generally, bear little fruit. My own constituency was literally smothered with Tory literature, and the cottage fires burnt more freely in consequence. From circumstances too lengthy to detail, the constituency was better informed on Irish subjects than many others, though I believe I have not an Irishman for a constituent—at least, to my knowledge. But the working men of South Somerset understand the question, and they teach others. They are doing so now. This should be the case everywhere. Very simple leaflets, very carefully distributed, and not too many of them—Meetings large and small and enough of them, not too many, or they will be failures and do harm—these are very simple remedies for

Liberal disunion. THE subject of all pamphlets and at all meetings should be almost exclusively Ireland and how to be friendly with her. Many well-meaning Liberals are making grave mistakes with the best intentions almost daily. Here are some of them : One section conceive that the more advanced the programme the more united the party, forgetful that a wrong impression of what Mr. Chamberlain meant by Ransom lost us thousands of shopkeepers' and professional votes in 1885. Another wrong impression as regarded the intentions of our leaders in connection with the *immediate* disestablishment and disendowment of the Church lost us more, and neither gained us a handful of votes. The extreme section is always with us, and so are almost all Nonconformists. By pleasing them more you cannot double their votes. That I am not personally afraid of a strong programme I have shown in the early part of this article, but I realise that WE MUST BE NUMEROUS TO BE STRONG, and I write in the hope that I may show how those *not* with us can be won back or gained to our cause.

Then we call names, AS IF, FORSOOTH, BY

TICKLING THE EARS OF THOSE ALREADY WITH US WE COULD GAIN A SINGLE VOTE.

Then, though we still follow Mr. Gladstone, there are some who realise that sooner or later we must choose another leader, so they begin NOW to think about it, and SO DIE A FRESH DEATH EVERY MONTH. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil" was never more true or the maxim more called for.

Then we are in a hurry to unite the party, and people in a hurry always make mistakes in the sphere of English politics. Surely we might have learnt this. No, the duty that lies at our door is to be patient, without being idle and courteous without sacrifice of principle. A NATION LOOKS TO US FOR HELP. The democracy is realising this, and will do so more each day in proportion as it understands the question before it and the safety of granting what that nation asks. There are young men amongst us who are coming on and will make good leaders in due course, and after passing through the necessary experience and after making the unavoidable mistakes which all bold and brave men make.

In the meantime Mr. Gladstone lives and

retains his powers in an extraordinary degree, but as his strength fails the strength of his policy gains. HIS PRINCIPLES WILL LIVE AND HIS MAXIMS WILL BE OUR GUIDE LONG AFTER HE HAS GONE, AND WHEN HIS ELOQUENCE IS SILENT. The yearnings of a nation will outlive more than one election, and those who, without hope of reward, have patiently laboured in the shade of opposition and in the face of much misrepresentation, shall yet have as their reward the gratitude of a downtrodden and hitherto misruled nation, while the Imperial interests they have been accused of sacrificing will be strengthened and consolidated with every concession to NATIONAL SENTIMENT WHICH EXPERIENCE SHOWS TO BE FOUNDED ON THE ETERNAL PRINCIPLES OF TRUTH, OF RIGHT, AND OF JUSTICE.

KILCOURSIE.

THOMAS BURT, M.P.

OUR defeat was due mainly to divisions in our ranks, and to the mixing up of the Land Purchase Scheme with the question of self-government for Ireland. It is quite true that LORD HARTINGTON AND MR. CHAMBERLAIN—the most energetic and most powerful of the Dissident Liberals — CARRIED VERY FEW LIBERAL ELECTORS WITH THEM TO THE POLLS. When we remember Mr. Chamberlain's popularity a year ago, it is astonishing that his recent attitude should have produced so little impression upon Radicals throughout the country. OUTSIDE BIRMINGHAM and its immediate neighbourhood HE WIELDED LITTLE OR NO DIRECT INFLUENCE DURING THE ELECTION. But though the opposition of the above-named statesmen, and that of Mr. Bright (which though less active was perhaps more potent than either) did not make many converts from

the Liberal to the Tory side, it certainly produced perplexity and bewilderment in many minds. This no doubt contributed to swell the number of abstentions which had such a marked effect upon the result of the election. These divisions, too, were very damaging to the organisation of the Liberal party. The dissentients were not numerically powerful, but a large proportion of them were active and experienced organisers. Their sudden withdrawal from the local associations, weakened the force of Liberal organisation, which, at its best, had never been too effective.

But the most powerful direct cause of the Liberal defeat was undoubtedly in the association of the Land Purchase Bill with the principle of Home Rule. Mr. Gladstone seemed to recognise this, and at the very outset of the electoral campaign, he made a vigorous attempt to put the simple issue of self-government for Ireland before the electors. But the larger scheme had been fully debated and practically decided in the House of Commons and in the country. I am not blaming Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues for having originally brought forward the two questions together. They could

scarcely have done otherwise. Moreover great, if not ample, securities had been taken to protect the Imperial Exchequer against serious loss. But from the first the proposals relating to land were viewed with distrust by nearly all the Radicals in the House of Commons.

The action of many of the Whigs—of nearly all indeed except Lord Hartington—with respect to the land scheme, was not so honest and straightforward as one could have wished. They attacked and misstated the proposals of Mr. Gladstone; they grossly exaggerated the amount of the Imperial guarantee; they ignored the security that had been taken to protect the Exchequer; they appealed to the most selfish and most sordid passions of the tax-payers. Everybody knew that this was done solely to discredit and damage Home Rule; and that, provided the principle of local self-government for Ireland were carried, these same gentlemen would care chiefly to exact the best possible terms for the Irish landlords without much regard for the tax-payers.

Ireland. — As regards future legislation Ireland must be placed in the very front. Until that question is disposed of it is idle

for Lord Randolph Churchill to promulgate his "wonderful encyclopædia of promises." Ireland blocks the way of all useful legislation. The one plain, definite issue to put before the country is whether or not we shall allow the Irish people to manage their own affairs. The Irish land question should be left to be settled by itself on its own merits. An appeal to the British democracy on these lines would result, if I am not greatly mistaken, in a verdict very different from that recorded at the last General Election.

Other Questions.—It would be easy to add to the list of Liberal measures here indicated. Scores of great questions demand early settlement. But it is useless—it may be mischievous—to enumerate measures which, from one cause or another, are not ripe for immediate legislation. What is wanted is to discipline and unite our forces rather than to formulate extensive programmes. Experience has proved that the Liberal party is powerful only so far as it is a united party—or so far as it is agreed on the main principles of its policy.

As the majority of Liberals will henceforth belong to the Radical section, that section will

rightly claim to have a preponderating voice in shaping the programme of the future. The split which has taken place has only been accelerated by Mr. Gladstone's Irish proposals. Most of the seceders would probably in any case have left the Liberal ranks at a later date. When such questions as Land Reform came to be effectually handled by the Legislature, the Whigs could not for long have kept pace with the more advanced wing of the party.

Meanwhile the great work of the present may be summed up in three words—Educate, Re-unite, Organise. Instruct the electors in Liberal principles ; strive to effect a re-union of the Liberal Party ; and organise that Party throughout the country on a thoroughly representative and democratic basis. As to other reforms — Taxation, the Church, Land, the House of Lords, and Payment of Members—I substantially agree with the views so ably set forth by Mr. Labouchere.

Temperance.—The Liberal Party ought to take up Temperance legislation more ardently than they have done in the past. Twice by increasing majorities the principle of Local Option has been affirmed by Parliament. The

Licensed Victuallers and drink-sellers as a body are firmly allied with the Tory Party. Nearly everywhere the most earnest workers in the Liberal Cause are temperance reformers. These men are dissatisfied that nothing has been done by the Liberal Party to advance temperance. The delay is partly due no doubt to the fact that THIS QUESTION IS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM. That is a very large and complicated subject. It calls loudly for settlement on a thoroughly popular basis. Principles already accepted in parliamentary elections, such as Vote by Ballot, Abolition of Property Qualification, must be embodied in any scheme of Local Government. The establishment of such a scheme would prepare the way for settling the temperance question. It would also send a healthy stream of life through the "Sleepy Hollows" of the country districts, and would reduce to order the chaos of conflicting authorities which now manage our local business.

THOMAS BURT.

SIR EDWARD J. REED, K.C.B., M.P.

ALTHOUGH not unmindful of the political and administrative reforms for which the United Kingdom, as a whole, is still waiting (too patiently, as I think) I cannot help putting IN THE FORE-FRONT of my reply to you the more urgent need of WALES. The experience of the Church and of Churchmen, which I have acquired in Wales as member for Cardiff, has convinced me that while not a few Churchmen are true Christians and true Liberals, both in heart and in mind, the State Church there, as such, is an engine of political, social, and religious evil, continually at work, and continually producing those very jealousies, antagonisms, and strifes, which are so injurious to social communities and which Christianity was designed to mitigate. Its Disestablishment is the most urgent of all Reforms in Wales, and is an indispensable preliminary to the true peace and progress of the

Principality. The Liberal Party should devote themselves to this among their very first works.

The Tithe Question—so closely associated with the Church Question in the thoughts and sentiments of the Welsh people—is scarcely less urgent. The imposition of Tithes upon Tenants must be abolished. At the best Tithe is but a mortgage upon land, and the landlords should pay it, and not worry the tenants with it. It must be classed with, and subject to the vicissitudes of, Rent.

Wales is in urgent need of legislation in favour of the education of its people. Something, in truth much, was done by Mr. Gladstone's Government of 1880—85, in this respect; but Intermediate Education, to come between the Board Schools and the University Colleges, is in urgent demand, and the Liberal Party owe it to Wales to secure to it the advantages possessed by other parts of the United Kingdom.

THE WELSH MEMBERS MUST COMBINE, as they are endeavouring to do, INTO A COMPACT AND SOLID POLITICAL PHALANX, ready to fight for every Liberal measure, but demanding for Wales what is due to it, and making the support of Welsh measures a condition of giving their

own support to other sections of the House of Commons—not always and without exception, of course ; but as far as is possible.

AS REGARDS THE POSITION OF THE LIBERAL PARTY GENERALLY, I AM FULL OF HOPE AND CONFIDENCE. Our prospect of office and of governing power is somewhat remote ; but our prospect of seeing legislation advanced in the right direction is, or seems to me to be, both near and bright. I do not believe that this will be brought about by the re-union of all who have been esteemed, or have really been Liberals. THE CLEAVAGES IN BOTH THE GREAT BRITISH PARTIES ARE BECOMING WIDER EVERY DAY. The Whig Party and the Tory Party will coalesce, while the so-called Tory-Democrat Party will henceforth take their lead from the Radical Party, and fight on our lines, although not, for a time, under our banners. I am not displeased with this prospect. The Liberals have not turned office to good account—certainly not to the best account. We have had but little of that Peace and Retrenchment which ought to have advanced with Reform ; on the contrary, we have had extravagant, even lavish, administration, and the

aristocracy have had things all their own way all over the place. The Navy, which I know, has been the scene of wanton waste ; so has the Army ; so have some other of the Public Departments. Parliament has been literally laughed at in the public offices as a powerless body of grumblers, while Ministers, who should have been all-powerful for good, have been the mere spokesmen, apologists, servants, of those who laugh at us and at them.

About one thing I, for one, am anxious. We are menaced with fresh attacks upon the Freedom of Parliament, and that right early. And these attacks will be the more dangerous because they are to be made in the name of that very Freedom ! I am not averse to improved procedure, of course, nor to arrangements for quickening the despatch of "Business." But I SHALL NEVER CEASE TO REGRET THE VOTES I GAVE IN A CERTAIN AUTUMN SESSION OF THE 1880—85 PARLIAMENT IN FAVOUR OF LIMITING THE FREEDOM OF GENERAL DEBATE. For example, WE STRUCK THEN—NOT SEEING CLEARLY WHAT WE WERE ABOUT—AT THE GREAT AND PRICELESS PRINCIPLE embodied in the words "Grievance

before Supply." We are to be asked next session to go further in this direction, and in similar directions. I, for one, shall stoutly decline to do so. If we are not careful in this matter we shall allow Governments to steal from Parliament its power, its freedom, and its mastery. With our ancient Parliament cast down, and bound hand and foot, what will become of the country? The constituencies will soon find out the consequent feebleness of their representatives—our powerlessness to contend for their good, our voicelessness on their behalf in times of trial; and THEN WILL FOLLOW SUCH A REVOLUTION AS WE HAVE NOT DREAMED OF—a Revolution like that which a steam boiler resorts to when the safety-valve is screwed down. LET US KEEP CLOSE AND VIGILANT WATCH OVER THE REAL FREEDOM OF PARLIAMENT.

EDWARD J. REED.

THE HON. WALTER H. JAMES, M.P.

THE Liberal policy is at present to remain in opposition : the Liberal programme is one mainly of education. The support given to the Bill of the late Government defeated upon the second reading in last May, involved on the part of the minority in that memorable division adherence to a principle to the fulfilment of which they are honourably pledged. Defeated in the appeal to the constituencies, 1,238,342 electors in England, Wales, and Scotland, cast their votes on the side of the defeated cause : It is no less a fact that the Tory Party now installed in office are in a minority of the aggregate votes of the House of Commons. Efforts are being made in certain quarters to effect a combination to dislodge them from their tenure of office. If such tactics are to involve the sacrifice of the principle of which the National Party in Ireland

are the exponents, and to which the large majority of the Liberals in the country are committed, NOTHING AWAITS THEM IN THE FUTURE BUT CONFUSION, CHAOS, AND DESPAIR.

So far from the election of 1886 being a death blow to the Home Rule movement, it is a matter for surprise that so much popular adhesion should have been given to it. The English democracy have long deemed it a policy out of keeping with their accustomed thoughts. Many felt by its adoption, as it were, jolted out of the ordinary grooves and ruts along which they had travelled many years. The great out-works of the Liberal Party are held by the Nonconformists, and occasional signs have not been wanting of a movement to stir the dead bones of religious hatred and animosity. The most unrelenting opponents of Home Rule can bring however no substantial proof that the Legislative Union has in the smallest degree succeeded in uniting the hearts and affections of the British and the Irish towards those common ends of National Life and Empire to which all members of both communities may reasonably be expected to aspire. No reasonable and sane being, it might be almost doubted whether any

one even within the walls of Bedlam, could deny, that whatever the perils of a Parliament in Dublin, those of eighty-five members sitting in a Parliament in London resolute to discredit its reputation, to paralyse its efficiency, was an even greater danger. The knowledge of these facts amongst the electorate still remains very limited. They have from long usage been wont to disregard Irish grievances, and to THINK OF IRELAND ONLY AS A COUNTRY IDENTIFIED WITH CRIME AND OUTRAGES. They have never grasped the whole system of Irish local government—the agrarian and social condition of the country directed from Dublin Castle, and controlled through the action of a hereditary chamber.

These facts must be brought home by the legitimate methods of political discussion, by education in the facts of history, and constitutional agitation in the course of which NO CAUSE GOOD IN ITSELF SHOULD BE DEEMED EITHER HOPELESS OR FORLORN. In almost every constituency there is for the time a sense of weariness almost verging to disgust over the wrangle of party politics. The seamy side of human nature seems more largely developed in these pursuits

almost than any other. The task of those politicians who believe good government to be bound up with the success of Liberal measures, must be mainly concentrated in developing the overlooked historical and general aspects of the Irish problem. The distorted ideas of separation must be disposed of, the limits of self-government formulated and declared, and the knowledge brought home that its settlement involves a good deal more than the maintenance of order in one particular county, or the removal of the incidents of boycotting, whether it be in respect of the brutality of the boycotter, or the sufferings of the boycotted.

Ireland is a country of contradictions, and how the end is to be obtained without hardship or with the least hardship on those classes who have for many years controlled society and Government in Ireland, will tax statesmanship to its uttermost. IN DETAIL THERE IS NO LIMIT TO COMPROMISE, BUT IN THE MAIN PRINCIPLE OF IRELAND GOVERNED IN ITS NATIONAL AFFAIRS BY IRISH MEN, THERE MUST BE NONE WHATEVER. It is said no Englishman knows when he is beaten. The strategic position of the Irish Party in Parliament under an extended franchise

has given them more than ever the key of the situation, and it is a necessity to "stoop to conquer."

Nothing probably was more distasteful to some at least of the actual perpetrators of the Legislative Union, than the means employed for the consummation of their end. It is probable the course adopted by them existed at the time in its overwhelming necessity. If they sowed the wind the politicians of the present generation have reaped the whirlwind. In one conspicuous instance, that of Lord Castlereagh, it is probable the aspersions cast, the hatreds generated, the recollections fired and animosities sustained, are such that (however just or otherwise may be their merits) no explanation will ever mitigate, or lapse of time assuage, their intensity. New manners necessitate new laws. The promoters of Home Rule call down curses and execrations. They have aroused much bitterness and resentment, they have set many party combinations in a state of quarrel, they have estranged many personal friends. Few of the authors of the new departure may witness its results. In a dim and distant future more tranquil memories will surround their efforts than those that encompass

a narrative of seven centuries of strife. To let men alone is a sentiment on which all find it difficult to act. Too long have we striven and striven vainly to engraft on Ireland English habits and English thoughts. The result has been a parasitic growth. If politics are no tpersonal matters, THE FIXED ORBIT OF THE PLANETS IS AS CERTAIN AS THAT JUST CONCESSIONS TO THE LEGITIMATELY EXPRESSED WISHES OF A VAST MAJORITY OF HER PEOPLE WILL SATISFY THE IRISH NATION. Ireland will then remain no longer disaffected with a constant burden of bitterness and discontent, her population diminishing, her children Gibeonites, in the whole course of English history one long chapter of sorrow and reproach. With a sense of responsibility within herself, she will acquire those elements of character which the Irish race have hitherto lacked. No longer a cause of weakness, she will be to England a source of increasing strength : the discreditable wrangle of so many generations will have been wiped out, and the desultory but never failing burden, that proceeds from every English politician, THAT WE HAVE BEEN GOVERNED BY IRELAND FAR TOO LONG ALREADY, will be well and wisely terminated. IN

FIDELITY TO THESE OPINIONS, WHICH CONTAIN THE PRINCIPLE OF LIBERTY AND SELF-GOVERNMENT, THE LIBERAL PARTY OF THE FUTURE MUST EITHER SINK OR SWIM.

WALTER HENRY JAMES.

WILLIAM SUMMERS, M.P.

THE prospects of the Liberal party, say the prophets of evil amongst us, are of the most gloomy and dismal description. The policy of Home Rule for Ireland has been condemned by the irrevocable and irreversible verdict of the electors of Great Britain, and the Tory party occupies at this moment a position of such undoubted and such unassailable strength that it is likely to remain in the enjoyment of place and power for many a long year to come.

This I believe to be a thoroughly superficial view of the existing political situation. It is true, no doubt, that we suffered a severe reverse at the recent general election, and the reasons for this reverse are not, I should say, very difficult to discover. The question of Home Rule was new and strange to the electors, and we know

from experience that it always takes a certain amount of time to familiarize the public mind with the varied aspects of a question so large as this. It is to be remembered also that the policy of self-government for Ireland was seriously hampered and handicapped by being presented in conjunction with a gigantic scheme for buying out the Irish landlords by means of an Imperial guarantee. Is Home Rule worth 150 millions? was the specious question put by Tory candidates to agricultural labourers in the country and to the artisans of our manufacturing towns, and it is not surprising that to a question put in these terms a negative answer was in many cases given.

The last election, then, was fought by the Liberals under very disadvantageous circumstances. Yet even so it did not result in such an utter rout of our forces as many persons have fondly imagined.

Of the four nationalities into which the United Kingdom is divided, the English alone pronounced against the Irish proposals of the late Government. Scotland, ever true to the principles of Liberal policy, pronounced in their favour by three to two; Ireland by four

and a half to one, and Wales by as many as five to one. Taking all three countries together they were as three to one in favour of Mr. Gladstone's policy. Most important of all is Ireland herself, for Ireland is beyond question the key of the present political situation. Upon her conduct and upon her efforts depends in a very large measure the success or failure of the Home Rule movement. For the present at all events the Nationalists are supreme in the sister island. The Catholic provinces are entirely in their hands and even in Ulster they are able to hold their own. Turbulence and disaffection may prevail in the ranks of the Orange party, but IT IS DIFFICULT TO AVOID THE BELIEF THAT THE DISTURBANCES that have recently been witnessed in the north of Ireland ARE THE EXPIRING EFFORTS OF A DYING CAUSE. "The more violent the hatred of the Orangemen," writes the author of *Peter Plymley's Letters*, "the more certain the reconciliation of the Catholics. The disaffection of the Orangemen will be the Irish rainbow; when I see it, I shall be sure that the storm is over."

The Tory party does not possess a majority

in the present House of Commons. It is, as a matter of fact, in a minority of thirty-eight. The Tory Government, therefore, is not kept in office by Tory votes, but by the votes of some seventy-five gentlemen who style themselves Liberal Unionists. The split in the Liberal party is by many persons attributed simply and solely to the action of Mr. Gladstone in adopting the policy of Home Rule for Ireland. Against this view it is only right that we should remember that A WHIG SECESSION from the main body of the Liberal party HAS LONG BEEN FORESEEN, AND WOULD IN ANY CASE HAVE BEEN SPEEDILY CONSUMMATED, whilst the Irish question urgently pressed for a solution and would not brook delay. Mr. Gladstone was like a hen with a brood of ducklings, and it was no fault of his if they took to the water at last.

The great body of the seceders, then, are Whigs, and, as all the world knows, their leader is Lord Hartington. Now, with respect to LORD HARTINGTON, it is hardly necessary to say that all men admire the straightforwardness and manly honesty of his character, whilst all Liberals must be

grateful to him for the services which in other days he has rendered to the cause of progress and reform. Respect for his past services, however, ought not in any way to prevent us from freely expressing our opinion with regard to his recent action.

It is, then, I take it, altogether beyond dispute that no man is responsible to a greater degree than Lord Hartington for the delay that has occurred in the granting of self-government to Ireland. It was he who moved the rejection of the Government of Ireland Bill, and thereby brought about the overthrow of Mr. Gladstone's Government. Finding that he had comparatively few followers amongst the rank and file of the Liberal party, he made an alliance with the Tory chiefs, and went so far as to recommend Liberals in the constituencies to vote for Tory candidates as against supporters of the late Government. In his own constituency the Tories came to his rescue and saved him from defeat, for it is not pretended that he polled a moiety of the votes of the Liberal electors in the Rossendale Division. Of his followers in the late Parliament, many disappeared at the recent election, whilst the

remainder retained their seats simply in consequence of the alliance that had been struck with the leaders of the Tory party. Notwithstanding his firm and persistent opposition to Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule scheme, Lord Hartington himself has found it necessary to advance in the direction of Home Rule, though he would only give the new Irish authorities power that he proposes to call into existence to deal with certain Irish affairs, and would withhold from them altogether the administration of justice. Still, the mere fact that Lord Hartington has advanced somewhat in the direction of Home Rule is in itself enough to prove that the cause of Irish self-government lives and moves, and to afford ample ground for believing that "it will arise, as a wounded warrior sometimes arises on the field of battle and stabs to the heart some soldier of the victorious army who has been exulting over him."

A small and a less important section of seceders recognises MR. CHAMBERLAIN as its leader. It is not always easy to understand the grounds of the action of the member for West Birmingham, and to the unsophis-

ticated mind he appears to have fathered at different times different and even contradictory plans for solving the Home Rule problem. At one moment he is an advocate of National Councils, at another he appears to argue in favour of a large scheme of federation, and at yet a third he declares in favour of four provincial councils—all of them to be controlled from Westminster. To each of these schemes in turn he is devotedly attached, and he fondles them in his arms with all the affection of a parent for his offspring. But his affection is short-lived.

“As one nail by strength drives out another,
So the remembrance of his former love
Is by a newer object quite forgotten”

I fear, then, that we have little to hope for from “the halting, stumbling, ever shifting, ever vanishing projects” of the seceding Liberals, and it remains true after, just as it was true before, the election, that Mr. Gladstone’s policy still holds the field.

Home Rule for Ireland has been adopted and enrolled as an article in the creed of the Liberal Party, and its triumph in the not far

distant future is practically assured. MANY OTHER QUESTIONS there are, no doubt, which are ripe or will shortly be ripe for settlement. The reform of the laws relating to LAND and the extension of LOCAL GOVERNMENT in Great Britain are measures that have been too long delayed, and measures, moreover, about which there is a general agreement amongst all reasoning and thinking men. Again, to quote the words of Mr. Bright, "a house of hereditary legislators cannot be a permanent institution in a free country," whilst the continued presence of the Bishops in the HOUSE OF LORDS is a flagrant violation of the principle of religious equality. Other reforms, such as the RE-ADJUSTMENT OF TAXATION and the improvement of our educational system, are likewise urgently required, but it may well be doubted whether much progress can be made in dealing with any of these questions so long as the Irish problem remains unsolved. Whilst, therefore, it is our plain and obvious duty to press forward all Liberal measures whenever opportunity offers, our best endeavours should be directed to the improvement of our organisation and to the

instruction of the great body of the electors with regard to the history of the sister island, and the wants and grievances and wishes of her people.

WILLIAM SUMMERS.

JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.

EVENTS connected with the last election made it perfectly clear to my mind that the Liberal Party needs reconstruction. The defections which were so observable were not, from my point of view, merely temporary; they expressed a cleavage in the Liberal Party which never can be healed by mere concession or compromise. The fact is that amongst those who have hitherto been called Liberals there are certain leading men whose political creed is essentially Conservative. Lord Selborne, Lord Hartington, Mr. Goschen, and Lord Derby, though by no means destitute of Liberal instincts and aspirations, are unquestionably Conservative in view of the great questions which will presently divide public opinion into two distinct and irreconcilable sections. We must lay our account, therefore, with all the difficulties of reconstruction, sustaining for the time being

great losses, and subjecting ourselves to considerable contempt of a Tory kind. All this, however, amounts to nothing; provided that those who are Liberals really believe in certain vital principles, and are truly faithful to one another. Looking at the whole question from a Nonconformist point of view, I cannot but feel that the Liberal Party can only exist on the understanding THAT CHURCH ESTABLISHMENTS are certainly given up in argument: there may be diversities of opinion as to the time of action, or as to the particular mode of procedure; but the consent as to the argumentative defeat of Church Establishments must be complete and cordial. I believe Mr. Gladstone himself has said that as an argument the State Church in England is gone. This is enough, therefore, to point out Mr. Gladstone as the natural and continuous leader of the Liberal Party. I do not ask that all men who are sent to Parliament shall be prepared at the next election to vote for Disestablishment. I am more anxious that every man who goes to Parliament should say that the argument for State Churches is dead and buried, and that all that remains now is the conception of a

wise statesmanship as to dealing with undoubtedly practical difficulties. Disestablishment will certainly come, but I believe it will come rather incidentally than by way of direct onslaught. EVERY BOARD SCHOOL HELPS THE DISESTABLISHMENT OF ALL POPERIES, HIERARCHIES, AND SPIRITUAL DESPOTISMS. We have simply to work for the education of the common people, for the wide extension of intelligence upon all subjects, and in the long run the expanding and well-stored mind will assert its own claims and accomplish its own purposes. The work of Disestablishment is to be done quite as much indirectly as directly. They must not be thought indifferent Nonconformists who do not see their way clear to take an immediate part on the controversial side of the question. They may be working quietly, almost secretly indeed, but most surely, by simply living out their own convictions, and supporting their own places of worship, and doing all that in them lies to extend and liberalise the education of the people.

Nonconformists can have but little sympathy with the institution which is known as the HOUSE OF LORDS. They are not foolish enough

to suppose that a man is bad simply because he was born a lord; nor are they unwise enough to imagine that a man was called to statesmanship simply because he was born to a coronet. Nonconformists believe in aristocracy, but the aristocracy in which they believe is not hereditary, but personal; not a possession like a property, but a right that is acquired by force of mind and goodness of character. It will be difficult to institute what is called a Second Chamber on lines which will vitally contradistinguish it from the House of Commons. This, of course, is perfectly possible; at the same time it will be found to be difficult in practice. Here, again, it will be enough for us to agree in the general sentiment that a hereditary legislature is dead argumentatively. We have to deal with an actual institution, and we shall not proceed the less usefully and successfully because we proceed slowly. There are not wanting lords who confess that hereditary legislation is to be looked upon with suspicion. This opinion will gradually extend even in the Upper House itself, and thus in the end there will be a quiet submission to the inevitable, rather than a

degrading fall before merely violent attacks. Certainly whatever Second Chamber may be constituted, I should desire to see in it many of the lords who have distinguished themselves by great capacity of statesmanship and administration. In the House of Lords there are unquestionably some of the ablest intellects to be found in the British Empire. When, however, they find a place in the Second Chamber, it will not be because they are lords, but because they are philosophers, statesmen, and capable administrators. This will be the true honour. When men cannot help being in possession of high station there is no honour whatever attaching to their position; but when they are assigned places of eminence because of what they themselves are and what they have done, they may truly claim to be members of a vital aristocracy. Certainly I should almost instantly request the bishops to retire to their several dioceses, and to merge the energy which they are now spending as statesmen in the diminished strength which they are putting forth as bishops of the Church of God. The Bench of Bishops can hardly be regarded otherwise than as a blot on the constitution of the House

of Lords. There is no warrant whatever in the Apostolic writings for the position they occupy. From my point of view they are breathing the wrong atmosphere, and sustaining relations which cannot be helpful to the discharge of their episcopal functions. In any Second Chamber that may be formed in England I should distinctly hope that no bishop would find a place. It must not be supposed that thereby I wish to lessen the work of the bishops ; I simply wish to turn their energy into a right direction, so that their powers may not be frittered away in frivolous statesmanship, but utilised in great moral endeavours for the good of the people.

With the LAND QUESTION I dare hardly meddle. I am distinctly of opinion that the day of great ownerships has passed. I am not yet prepared to vote for the distribution of the land, or its nationalisation, without entertaining the question of compensation to present owners. We shall gain nothing by being unjust to men who have come into possession of land by ways that cannot now be traced out with any legal definiteness. As a matter of fact, they are found in a certain

position, and that position must be dealt with in its practical as well as its historical aspects. When a great public sentiment is created to the effect that the land, the light, the air were intended to belong to all men, the settlement of the distribution of land will become comparatively easy. We must do all in our power to remove the sophism that ownership in land is right. Land occupies the position which no other species of property can occupy. It was clearly not meant for the advantage of the few but for the good of the many. It may be possible that society has not at any previous period been ripe enough in its civilisation and training to undertake the cultivation of the land on what may be termed democratic conditions; but the democracy is no longer rude, untrained, and vulgar; it is a disciplined and educated democracy, and as such must assert its rights. But where the training and the discipline have been of the best kind there will be nothing of the nature of violence, certainly nothing that can be described justly as burglary.

My hope of the Liberal Party is in the spread of education. Conservatism of the baser type can only live upon popular superstition. Let

light be poured in plentifully upon all great questions. Let every man have an opportunity of forming an intelligent opinion for himself, and in proportion as intelligence spreads superstition will vanish, and in possession of a clear and strong mind the people will soon rectify their own questions and settle peacefully and justly all social relations. If I could influence any vote it would be in favour of MR. GLADSTONE, the philosophical and progressive statesman, as against other men of great reputation whose minds are far inferior to his in energy and foresight and generous interest in the future.

JOSEPH PARKER.

SIR WILFRID LAWSON, BART., M.P.

You ask me "to say a few words" for publication in *The New Liberal Programme*.

When I find in your list of those who have already undertaken to "say a few words," the names of my friends Mr. Jacob Bright, Mr. Burt, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Summers, and others, I feel that my own general views on the political situation will probably be, by them, expressed pretty nearly as I should desire.

I find that I was described last night at a great Licensed Victuallers' banquet in Manchester as "the embodiment and high-priest of the maudlin sentimentality of the advanced Puritanical school," and I fear that the advice of an "advanced Puritan" — whatever that may be—can add but little weight to that of the "advanced Radicals" whom I have named.

But I suppose that you really want to know

what I think that the Liberal leaders ought to do in order to reconstruct "that great instrument for good," the Liberal Party.

Well, I think that they ought to proclaim at once Liberal principles and a real Liberal policy. "The Liberal man deviseth Liberal things, and by Liberal things shall he stand."

Half a century ago, when the Tories were in want of a cry, Mr. Taper suggested "Our young Queen and our old Constitution." It would not, perhaps, be quite the thing to suggest now that half a century has elapsed, during which we have had two radical Reform Bills, that we should raise the cry, "Our old Queen and our new Constitution." It is too vague, at all events, for the electors of the present day, and is open to objection on other grounds.

"Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform," the grand old watchword of Liberalism in former days, embodies sound and noble policy as much as it ever did, but it hardly can be raised by the leading men of the late Liberal Administration, who occupied themselves when in office in bombarding mercantile cities, in invading countries the invasion of which they thought would benefit English financiers, in slaughtering

nationalities who were "rightly struggling to be free," and in raising a revenue of one hundred millions a year mainly to pay for these monstrous and revolting performances.

Nevertheless they may have the modest assurance once again to hoist the banner of Peace and Retrenchment, and if they can persuade "the masses" that they are genuine and trustworthy supporters of that banner, the thing is done, and the real Liberal Party is at once reconstructed.

But, granting that they are in earnest, and can also give the public the impression that they are so, far be it from me to express any confident belief that a sufficient number of "the masses" can be found to restore them *at once* to power.

The British nation may be described as a great drinking and fighting establishment.

These two employments, or enjoyments, or whatever they may be called, are enthusiastically promoted by the classes whose wealth, position and education enable them still to exercise an enormous political influence.

Well, my recipe for getting the Liberals back to power (and the longer they are *out* of power

so long as they have no programme for the general good, the better pleased shall I be), is for them to declare a crusade against Drinking and Fighting.

If they will only tell the people honestly and straightforwardly how the publicans rob them every year of £120,000,000, and the fighting interests of about £30,000,000, for no earthly good to any human beings except to a few beneficiaries of national abuses, they will, by and by, in spite of all the rubbish of Primrose Leagues, and Conservative Working Men's Clubs, have an army of intelligent and earnest supporters at their back, who will smite hip and thigh the hosts of Toryism and obstruction. Let them analyse the Tory arguments in favour of gin and glory, and prove, as it is easy to prove, that our present system is constructed so as to fill the pockets of a very limited class, at the cost and suffering of the multitude, and the people will respond. When "Prestige" and "Empire" are glorified, let them reply by "Peace and Prosperity" at home, and the hearts of the working classes will be won.

The people will find that the parson of whom we read was right—concerning whom it is

written in reference to his views on what is called the "Jingo Policy,"

"Our Parson he calls all these arguments lies,
And says they are nothing but just 'Fee Faw Fum,'
And that all this big talk of our destines
Is one half of it ignorance, t'other half rum."

I suppose we shall soon see whether our Liberal leaders have the pluck and the sense to sound the advance against the Hereditary Legislators, the Political Priesthood, the hireling warriors, and the licensed destroyers of order at home, or whether they will leave the attack to be undertaken and led by Lord Randolph Churchill. I hope the former, I half expect the latter.

WILFRID LAWSON.

BRAYTON, CARLISLE.

C. A. V. CONYBEARE, M.P.

THE first and most important work Liberals have in hand is to establish Home Rule for Ireland in the widest sense compatible with the integrity of the empire. Until that is done, Ireland will continue to block the path of every other reform. When a rational form of Home Rule Legislature has been conceded to Ireland, we shall be in a position to consider the application of the same principles of decentralisation (or, if you will, the devolution to sub-Parliaments of legislative and administrative powers) to the other portions of the United Kingdom. This will of course comprise the superseding of the existing chaos of irresponsible family parties in our counties by an orderly system of Representative Institutions. Any half measure, such as the Tories and their so-called "Liberal-Unionist" backstays seem likely to propose, will,

for the most obvious reasons, prove a disastrous failure. The difficulties in the way of some satisfactory settlement of this kind have been most absurdly (and, I must add, disingenuously, by appeals to panic, passion, and bigotry) exaggerated during the recent controversies, by men who will ten years hence, in all probability, look back with satisfaction at the *fait accompli*, and perforce wonder at their own petty fears and unstatesmanlike narrowness, which too long delayed the settlement.

The Confederation of the Empire is intimately connected with this all-important subject, and presupposes the reconstruction of our political system upon a Democratic, instead of an Aristocratic basis. I mention this, not to advocate any particular scheme of Federal Union, for no feasible one appears as yet to have suggested itself either to our colonies or ourselves, but, in order to emphasise the principle, which is essentially Democratic, that our Colonies are a *Part*, not a mere *Possession*, of Great Britain, and that it is the duty of the Liberal Party to facilitate by every means the merging of "Great Britain and Ireland" into the "United States of Great Britain." Our

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Colonial Empire of Greater Britain suggests our Indian Empire, of which I will only say that the vast problems it presents demand an immediate and far more scientific study on the part of our leaders than they have, as a rule, hitherto received.

As soon as we have cleared the way for legislation of a *domestic* character, AN ENTIRE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ELECTORAL LAW is a *sine quâ non*. Nothing short of MANHOOD SUFFRAGE is worth the attention of a Radical. And that in itself will be of little value without the following essential corollary reforms:—

(1) The abolition of the existing system of Registration. Every county, and each great city, should have its registration officer, who should be a public official, whose duty it would be to see that *every* person entitled to a vote is placed on the register. The registers should be made up twice a year; electors who have migrated from one constituency to another should be allowed to apply at once to the registration officer of their new constituency to have their names added to the list, and the lists should be published at the earliest possible moment after they have been completed. It

need hardly be said that all the absurdities of qualifications by payment of rates, residence for twelve months or more, University lodgers and service franchises, freemen of the City of London, &c., must be swept away.

(2) The present law respecting Returning Officers' expenses must be radically altered. It is at present simply an oligarchical dodge for fleecing the unfortunate candidates, in order to fill the pockets of local gangs of blackmailers, who are usually the wire-pulling attorneys of the Tory despots who still tyrannise over all the county districts. The election expenses should be defrayed out of the rates, and audited by representatives of the ratepayers, and members should be paid for the work they actually do.

(3) The second Ballot should be introduced. This would enable every party to try its luck, however weak it might be; but would insure that the strongest party in each constituency (as it ought to) secured the seat.

(4) Equal electoral districts should also be established on such a system as would insure an automatic redistribution of political power at every census. Such districts ought to contain a minimum number of 20,000 electors.

(The present average number of electors in every constituency is 10,000.) This would render possible a reduction in the number of Members of Parliament, which is now a great deal too large.

(5) No electors should be allowed to exercise more than one vote, and all elections (at a general election) should be on the same day. If it had not been for the duplicate voting, Mr. Gladstone would probably to-day be Prime Minister. When these or similar reforms have been carried—but not till then—we may hope to see reflected in the House of British Representatives the true feelings and wishes of the British Democracy, which it is the present object of all the privileged classes to stifle and render impotent by hanging on to every shred of the old abuses which have too long protected them.

When the Democracy is thus free and able to make its voice heard, and its power felt, its first duty will be to pass an Agrarian Law which will restore to the people of Great Britain the Land of which they have been systematically robbed in the past. I do not mean by this that the present owners should be dispossessed with-

out compensation, or at all : nor yet that every man or woman must enjoy "three acres and a cow." What has first to be done, is to ascertain by a strong and reliable Commission of Inquiry (1) what lands, having been in past times robbed from the people and given away by former sovereigns to their favourites, or their concubines or bastard offspring, have descended lineally from father to son until the present time in the same families. (2) What lands, common and waste or other, have been wrongfully or by unjust class legislation taken from the poor and monopolised by the rich. (3) What lands are at present lying uncultivated, and why? (4) The recent Domesday Book must be revised and corrected so as to show with something of accuracy (instead of by disingenuous multiplication of single Peers into many separate "owners") how many great landowners there are, and what is the size of their estates. Upon lands comprised in (1) and (2) a special tax should be imposed. Lands comprised under (3) should, if the owners were unable or unwilling to cultivate them, be taken over at their *then* market value by the local authorities and let or sold to labourers and others

who might be willing to cultivate them. All land, of whatever kind and value, should be deemed in the eye of the law to belong to the People of the country, which ownership should be recognised by a sufficient land tax, which should be irredeemable, and which should be revised from time to time so that the whole community should have the benefit of the "unearned increment." But these points suggest much else connected with the general question of taxation which I cannot now touch upon.

With a view to breaking up the gigantic estates which are one of the greatest evils of our system, primogeniture and entails must be abolished, and settlements, if not also abolished, be rigorously confined to those made by a settlor for the protection of *his own* children. Title by public registration only, and whatever other simplification of the forms of transfer of land is necessary, must be introduced, so that there may be no more difficulty or expense in conveying an estate of land than there is in transferring an estate consisting of stocks and bonds.

Security of tenure, together with fair rents (which, in the case of agricultural holdings,

should be proportioned according to a recognised scale to the yearly value of the farm produce), should be the law for every kind of holding ; and land courts should be established to give effect to it. In the case of mineral properties, too, the rents, royalties, and dues should be similarly apportioned on a sliding scale according to the profits made by those who do the work. The present landlord right to confiscate his tenants' improvements must be abolished. Every tenant should have full compensation for improvements made by him and his predecessors.

The Game Laws should, of course, be abolished. Every occupier should be free to kill whatever flies or runs over his land and crops.

The HOUSE OF LORDS is useless and dangerous, and ought to be abolished—and the sooner the better.

Many important questions arise under the head of Taxation, of which I can only mention as the most urgent, the due rating of the country mansions of the aristocracy, the abolition of all sinecure offices, the proportioning of salary and pensions to work in the case of those

offices which are not altogether sinecures; a thorough overhauling of the Civil List (why are we paying our Sovereign at the rate of £400,000 or more per annum, when the Civil List was fixed at £385,000?); the income tax if not abolished—it should be only a special tax for urgent emergencies—to be graduated.

Free schools and Disestablishment throughout the country are matters about which, I presume, no Radical can have two opinions.

There are, of course, other most important and urgent measures of social reform connected with the Emancipation and Organisation of labour. But these are too wide to be here touched upon. I have merely endeavoured to sketch in outline what, as a Radical believing in the principles of democracy, I believe to be the first and most urgent reforms necessary for the establishment of our Political Society upon a firm and enduring basis.

C. A. V. CONYBEARE.

WALTER S. B. McLAREN, M.P.

THERE can be little doubt that the present is a suitable time for the Liberal Party to make clearly known to the country what are its aims. That the vast majority are resolved to adhere to the principle of Home Rule for Ireland, and to a very wide development of local self-government for the other parts of the kingdom, may be taken as certain. The rank and file of the party were, I believe, fully prepared for the acceptance of Home Rule before Mr. Gladstone advised it; and it was due to an honest conviction, which had been growing for years, that force was no remedy, that coercion was an immoral method of government, and that a nation should be governed in the way it desires, that the Liberal Party so heartily responded to the call of its leader. THE PRINCIPLE CANNOT STOP IN IRELAND. Though there

is no need to press upon Scotland, Wales, and various parts of England, systems which they do not ask for, there is one portion of legislative work which should be taken from the Imperial Parliament and given to provincial assemblies—that is, the power of Private Bill legislation. There would be no change more in harmony with Liberal principles, or more desired, at any rate by Scotland and Wales.

It is true, as stated by others in this book, that the RADICAL REFORM OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS is a pressing part of the work we have to do, and it is no doubt also true that that body blocks the way and prevents those other reforms which are so much needed. Nevertheless, considering the great difficulties in the way, I am not prepared to advocate that this reform should be pressed to the front, and that other measures which have been worked for during many years should be delayed in consequence. OF ALL THE QUESTIONS before the country, the two most pressing are, if we may judge from the evils for which the present systems are responsible—a very fair test—THE LAND QUESTION AND THE DRINK QUESTION. Regarding the former, it only needs to be

stated that 874 persons own a quarter of England and Wales ; that 70 persons own half of Scotland, and 1,700 own nine-tenths of it ; that 750 persons own half of Ireland, and that the great bulk of the land in the country cannot be freely bought and sold, to show how bad laws must be which foster such a system. Fortunately, the landowners have been driven by suffering to see the evils of the system for themselves, and are in a mood to accept a change ; but should prosperity return to them, they will harden their hearts like Pharaoh of old, and with a like result. To the realisation of the principle of Free Trade in Land, the Liberal Party should now devote its most strenuous efforts, and should accompany it with a scheme for the creation of peasant proprietors, based upon a desire to benefit the buyers, and do no more, but also no less, than justice to the sellers.

Great as are the commercial and economical evils of our present land laws, it may well be doubted whether they do as much harm to the country from every point of view as our liquor laws. I am no advocate of total prohibition by law. The change which all desire must

come from the people themselves and not from Parliament ; but at the present time Parliament puts every obstacle in the way, by refusing to the people the power to govern themselves. There is no question upon which the whole party is more deeply pledged than that of Local Option ; there is none upon which our leaders have shown so little earnestness and courage. They have been either unwilling or afraid to deal with it. Probably both. There is no question on which the workers of the Liberal Party all over the country feel more strongly, and those who represent them in Parliament will betray their trust if they are content to shelve this question again, or to accept a measure relegating the duty of licensing to County Boards. It should be dealt with by special Boards strengthened by the power of the direct popular vote.

There is no duty that more clearly belongs to the Liberal Party than the settlement of the PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE AND REGISTRATION on a sound and rational basis. Our present law is complicated and full of anomalies. There are too many qualifications. A SIMPLE HOUSEHOLD SUFFRAGE WITH SHORT RESIDENCE AND

WITH ONE VOTE ONLY TO EACH PERSON should be established. But the Liberal Party will make a serious, if not fatal error, IF THEY DO NOT INCLUDE DULY QUALIFIED WOMEN IN THE LIST OF PARLIAMENTARY VOTERS. Their enfranchisement cannot long be delayed. It is just in itself, it is in harmony with the historic creed of Liberalism, and with the teaching of all our leaders, even though some of them have not seen fit to carry out their own doctrines to a logical conclusion. In the present House of Commons a majority of the Liberals, of the Conservatives, and of the Nationalists are pledged to it, while of the Dissident Liberals the views of the majority are not known. In the entire House there are only 136 known opponents. From the lowest party point of view it is therefore the interest of the Liberals to pass this measure, but it is their duty to do so for other and far nobler reasons.

IT IS A CURIOUS FACT THAT THE LIBERAL PARTY HAS TREATED WITH LEAST CONSIDERATION THOSE PORTIONS OF THE KINGDOM FROM WHICH IT DERIVES ITS GREATEST SUPPORT. Its treatment has been similar to that of the

father towards his son who was not a prodigal ; nothing was done for him, while the fatted calf was reserved for his wayward brother. So Scotland and Wales have received nothing, and Ireland has received much. The natural result is that Scotland at any rate is losing her faith in the Liberal Party, and at each election the Tories win seats. Scotland was mocked with a Crofters' Act utterly inadequate to her needs, and not even applying to all the counties where Crofters exist ; while the scandal of deer forests was untouched. The Scotch are anxious for even a more thorough land reform, on the lines of the Farmers' Alliance, than England is ready for. The Scotch cry for Disestablishment, accompanied with Free Education, becomes louder and louder, but falls upon the deaf ears of our leaders, whose aim seems to be to repress Scotch Radicalism. In Wales it is the same story. Welsh Education and Welsh Disestablishment are as pressing as similar questions in Scotland, but are equally neglected ; with the result that a Nationalist party is growing in the Principality demanding a legislature of its own.

THE COMMERCIAL INTERESTS of the country,

whether from the side of the employer or the employed, RECEIVE BUT SCANT ATTENTION FROM THE LIBERAL LEADERS. One has only to look through the lists of resolutions passed annually by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and by the Annual Meeting of Trades Unions to see what a vast number of useful reforms are neglected by the Liberal Party in Parliament. The desirability of most of these are not disputed, but they are simply ignored. As an instance, the appointment of working men and women as inspectors of mines, factories, and workshops may be mentioned. It excites much interest among the working classes who view with disgust the appointment of men who have no practical knowledge of the work they have to inspect. The assistance to trade that might be given by British consuls and ministers abroad is a matter on which commercial men feel strongly. Lord Rosebery made a small beginning by issuing a circular on the subject, but a different class of men must be appointed to these posts before there will be any great change. That many men who are commercial first and political afterwards, are losing faith in the Liberal

Party, few will deny. It is for the Party to bring these back by devoting its energy to increasing our commercial prosperity by every means in its power.

There are many other things that the Liberal Party looks forward to in the future. Want of space forbids the mention of more at present. In the one preliminary measure, Reform of Procedure in Parliament, I believe the Liberals are prepared to go a long way, and their zeal will not be damped because they are, for a time, in a minority. As was beautifully said of the Midland Capital, *THE LIBERAL PARTY HAS A PERPETUAL YOUTH AND A PERPETUAL FUTURE.* As we believe that the future belongs to us, so we are anxious to perfect that great machine which will enable us—or it may be will enable the Tories at our bidding—to turn out more perfectly and more quickly the work which lies waiting for us to do.

WALTER S. B. McLAREN.

HENRY P. COBB, M.P.

You ask me to write a few words in *The New Liberal Programme*, and I see that members of both Houses of Parliament have already contributed articles to your book. These, I understand, deal with many subjects, all of which must necessarily form part of the Liberal Programme. It would be superfluous for me to add anything to what will be so much better said by others. Their views will be generally in accord with my own, and my opinions, which I have often expressed, have not changed.

As the constituency which I represent is, in common with many others, largely agricultural, and those in it who form the Liberal Party are mostly artisans and agricultural labourers, perhaps you will allow me to write a few sentences upon the Allotments question only.

I have learnt much from personal intercourse with the working people in many towns and villages. My experience has shown me that the possession of an allotment, conveniently situated and at a fair rent, is a necessity to many a working man, and that he justly regards it as his right, and not as a privilege which is to be given to him as a kind of charity. He is willing to pay what is fair, and he asks for no favours.

It is encouraging to find that the Tory Party are now prepared to concede to local authorities the right of purchasing land *compulsorily* for allotments. It would be ungenerous on our part to inquire too closely into their reasons or motives for this change of opinion. It is sufficient for us that they have adopted our views, and we welcome them as allies in carrying them out. Mr. Chaplin and Mr. Finch-Hatton both introduced this year Bills recognising the principle of compulsion, and we all hope that the radical views recently expressed by Lord Randolph Churchill upon this and many other subjects may command the support of his colleagues and followers.

But compulsion is not everything, and the

experience which I have gained in Warwickshire and in many other counties shows me that the main thing which is necessary, and which the people demand, is *that the power of acquiring land for allotments, and the distribution and management of the allotments, shall be placed in the hands of a local body freely elected by the people, and in which they will have confidence.*

This seems a small thing to ask for, but we may find that there will be difficulty in getting it, and in my opinion it should form a leading part of the Liberal Programme. The general question of County Government may perhaps be dealt with by establishing popularly elected County Boards. That is a subject with which I am not now dealing, but I do not think that the establishment of County Boards will settle the Allotments question any more than it will settle the Drink question. Both of these should, I think, be dealt with by the people who live in more limited areas than counties.

In Mr. Chaplin's Bill the local authority to acquire and manage the land for allotments is the county magistrates. In Mr. Finch-Hatton's Bill the local authority in country places is the

rural sanitary authority—that is, the Board of Guardians. In Mr. Jesse Collings' Bill (which he reintroduced in the recent short session), the local authority is also the Board of Guardians. Neither of these bodies are popularly elected. The magistrates are not elected at all, and the guardians are elected by the plural vote, and not by ballot. Without entering into reasons, or raising points of controversy, it must, I think, be taken as a fact that the people would have little confidence either in county magistrates or in Boards of Guardians as bodies to acquire land, and to distribute and manage allotments. I am not for a moment implying that Mr. Collings has any sympathy with the plural vote. I am sure that he has not. He has done more than any one else in Parliament upon this question, but his Bill dealt with larger and more complicated matters than allotments, and he had to frame it accordingly. The demand for allotments at fair rents is so urgent, that I think it should be part of the Liberal Programme to bring in immediately a simple measure dealing with this question, *alone*, and which might have some chance of passing. Such a measure, in order

to be acceptable to those who are asking for it, must, in my opinion, establish in much smaller districts than counties a body to provide and manage allotments, and which shall be elected by the people *by ballot, and on the principle of one man one vote.* I intend to introduce a Bill with this object in the coming session.

HENRY P. COBB.

ROBERT LEAKE, M.P.

So far as I can ascertain the spirit of *The New Liberal Programme* from the single paragraph in which you briefly note down a few of its aims, I am in sympathy with it.

ROBERT LEAKE.

CALEB WRIGHT, M.P.

I AM in favour of the Radical measures mentioned in the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer at Dartford ; and I believe he will have the general support of the Liberal party, if the Government deal honestly with those questions. I am in favour of a thorough reform of the land laws, and the disestablishment of the Church ; but I fear that no progress will be made in these, and other useful legislation, until the Irish question is settled, in accordance with the wishes of the Irish people. Measures of the greatest importance, which have again and again been demanded by the people, and have been carefully considered by their representatives, and passed by the House of Commons, have been vetoed by the House of Lords : thus obstructing useful legislation, and delaying—often for years—the redress of the

wrongs of the people. I am therefore STRONGLY IN FAVOUR OF A THOROUGH REFORM OF THE UPPER HOUSE, and especially of the hereditary principle; which important question Lord Randolph Churchill quite ignores in his speech.

CALEB WRIGHT.

L. L. DILLWYN, M.P.

I AM glad to hear that the *New Liberal Programme* which you mention is about to be published, and I sincerely hope it may have the effect of strengthening the union now existing among earnest Liberals.

The Irish question which now most immediately presses, is one for the satisfactory settlement of which it appears to me that the first essential is that it may be acceptable to the Irish people, and if this can be secured I think that the details of the measure may well be left to be carried out by Parliament.

I attach great importance, too, to the early disestablishment of the State Church in Wales, in which country it commands the adhesion of but a very small proportion of the people, and is offensive to the remainder.

The reform or abolition of the Lēgislative

functions of the House of Lords will doubtless be largely treated of in the proposed publication. This branch of the Legislature as it exists at present is becoming more and more out of harmony with the other institutions of the country, and it cannot be doubted but that it should and will very soon be dealt with.

The Land Laws and many other questions will of course be treated of as occasion may arise, and upon these the newly enfranchised voters throughout the country will require information and guidance, as formerly so very considerable a portion of them were debarred from taking part in the enactment of the laws affecting their interests that it will not be surprising to find that much ignorance respecting them exists.

L. L. DILLWYN.

GEORGE HOWELL, M.P.

IN my opinion one of the chief aims of the Liberal Party should be to perfect our electoral system, on a basis that will apply equally to the whole of the United Kingdom. A simple residential franchise, with a self-acting method of registration, would result in an electorate which would be qualified to issue "the mandate of the constituencies" when occasion shall arise.

The Land question should be vigorously pushed to the front, and the Irish members should be asked to help the Liberal Party in their efforts to give security of tenure, at fair and fixed rents, with the right of free sale, to British agriculturists; and to assist in creating a peasant proprietary, such as would free the labourers from the grip of parish parson and

country squire, and all from the dominance of the lordly landowner.

Local self-government—so long knocked from side to side, like a ball in lawn-tennis, by both parties—should be taken in hand by the Liberals at once, on the basis of their own bills of 1871, strengthened wherever necessary, in substance and in form, in manner justified by subsequent experience. Any system of Local Government formulated by Tory squires and landowners would be disastrous to the nation.

The measure for the Government of Ireland must of necessity await events. The Tory Government will probably precipitate its consideration by some untoward action or proposal. The Liberal Party and the Irish Party will do well to watch and wait. A masterly inactivity, as regards this question, will best avail.

Any attempt to bribe Irish landlords should be stoutly resisted, under whatever guise it may be attempted.

And, lastly, any attempt to gag the freedom of “private members” must be resisted with

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THOMAS LEWIS, M.P.

IF the people of Wales are to remain loyal to the Liberal Party, for which they have hitherto sacrificed so much, immediate legislation on the following subjects is imperative, on the principle that their peculiarities as a people, and their circumstances as a nation, —should be recognised :—

I. Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of England in Wales.

II. Land.—Bills are required which will give more satisfactory security for improvements, protect tenants from arbitrary evictions, tend to facilitate the transfer of land, and enable tenants to become proprietors.

III. Intermediate Education to complete

the system of Education already inaugurated in the country.

IV. Reform of the Licensing Laws, which will involve a direct appeal to the ratepayers on the questions of restricting the number or altogether suppressing liquor licenses within certain districts.

These are the four planks of the Welsh National Programme. The loyalty of the Welsh people to Liberal principles, and to the great leader of the Liberal Party, has on many occasions been severely tested. This loyalty has never been duly recognised by the party. Little encouragement has ever been given to measures demanded by a vast majority of the people, and by the peculiar circumstances in which they are placed. Great irritation has been caused by the repeated refusal of the Government to recognise the necessity for a knowledge of Welsh as a qualification for judicial and other appointments in Wales.

A conviction is therefore growing that Welsh measures will never receive just and sympathetic consideration from the House of Commons as it is at present constituted, AND WE

NATURALLY LOOK TO A PARLIAMENT OR NATIONAL COUNCIL OF OUR OWN AS THE ONLY HOPE OF THE NATION. In this aspiration we are well assured that Scotland and Ireland will give us their sympathy and assistance.

THOMAS LEWIS.

R. B. HALDANE, M.P.

THE Liberal Party is likely to find that it has abundant time in which to consider its programme. It is the party of what must always be popular when advocated in a legitimate fashion—progress. But history shows that in British politics, as in other departments of human activity, progress takes place by a sort of rhythmic movement, the force of each great attempt to improve existing institutions, spending itself, and being succeeded by a period of reactionary feeling in the country. I thought before November, 1885, and I think now, that we had for some time prior to the General Election of that date entered upon a reactionary period. There were indications that the Liberal Party, like an exhausted swimmer, had reached the stage of spasmodic and irregular struggling for the preservation of its position. But for the

extension of the Franchise, I believe that we should then have been beaten in the country much as we were in 1874.

In this state of things there should be nothing to dishearten us—nothing that is not natural. On the contrary, if I am right, our defeat on the Irish policy of Mr. Gladstone was largely due, not to any widespread determination to reject that policy, but to the much more general cause which I have indicated. We have to consider the future with the knowledge that, reasoning by the analogy of the past, some considerable interval must elapse before we can regain our position, but that time is on our side. Our work now is to mature our programme.

The general aim of the Liberal Party I take to be to bring about such conditions as will admit of the greatest and most even diffusion of the ever-increasing moral and material prosperity with which civilisation is attended. In so far as it recognises that the development of the individual must be the work of the individual, it is distinguished from the Socialism which would interfere with the liberty of the individual for the individual's good. In so far as it insists that the title to exist of any existing institution,

however ancient and otherwise admirable, is subject to the necessity of its conforming to the conditions of this development, it is distinguished from Toryism. Modern Conservatism, and the creed of what is called Tory Democracy, appear to be only fine names for an unnatural subjection of Liberal principles to the championship of special interests. It is characteristic of Lord Randolph Churchill's leadership that the Conservative Party now seeks to identify with itself not merely the landed interest, but every sort and kind of special and class interest. Such a party can never have any really definite purpose which is other than negative in its character.

If I am right in my view of the aims of Liberalism, it becomes apparent that because freedom to develop implies liberty, not merely from material but from moral fetters, the policy of the Liberal Party must be largely an educational one. I believe that the time will come when the struggle between the two great parties in the State will be over the question of the diversion of public endowments from the purposes to which, by anomalies in our law, dead and other hands have been allowed to devote them, without limit of time, to the

purpose of the higher education of the children of the masses. It is IN THIS FORM THAT THE CASE FOR DISESTABLISHMENT WILL, AS IT SEEMS TO ME, ULTIMATELY PROVE IRRESISTIBLE.

But it is with the immediate future, and not with that which is more remote, that we have at present to do, and the two main obstacles in the path of progress with which the Liberal Party have to deal are the state of Ireland and the Land Question. ON THE QUESTION OF HOME RULE THERE IS AN AMBIGUITY WHICH OUGHT TO BE CLEARED UP. It is customary, particularly for Liberal Unionists, to talk of Home Rule for Scotland and Wales as if the problem in these portions of the United Kingdom were analogous to that in Ireland. As A SCOTCH MEMBER, I recognise that the transference to Scotland of much of the Scotch business which occupies, or rather ought to occupy, part of the time of Parliament, is inevitable. But legislation for the purpose of transferring this business to some kind of legislative body in Scotland will be based on the desire to get what is purely Scottish business managed, not only efficiently, but in accordance with Scottish ideas. There is no analogy

between the general features of this case and the peculiar feature of that of Ireland, the (in our view) necessity of establishing an Irish Government as the *sine quâ non* of the restoration of social order. At present there is to be seen in that country the deplorable spectacle of a competition between two ruling bodies—the constitutional but unpopular British Government, and the unconstitutional but popular Government of the National League. Our object is to restore social order by substituting for these two a single Government which shall be at once constitutional and popular, and for this purpose to establish not only an Irish Legislative Body, but an Irish Executive, subject, of course, to the Imperial sovereign Parliament, but to be left, as a matter of practice, to manage Irish affairs according to Irish ideas. The form of the Act of Parliament by which this is to be done is a matter of indifference to us so long as it is done; but it cannot be too clearly understood that by Home Rule GLADSTONIAN LIBERALS NECESSARILY MEAN AN IRISH EXECUTIVE, NOT LESS THAN AN IRISH LEGISLATIVE BODY. Personally I am further strongly of opinion that the present

system of landlord and tenant in Ireland has become past mending, and that the establishment of Home Rule ought to be accompanied by the buying out of the landlords at proper prices, an operation which, I am convinced, could be carried out with financial safety.

The second of the obstacles, to which I referred above, is the existing LAND SYSTEM. What do Liberal principles necessitate? Not certainly, under present circumstances, general expropriation of private owners of land to make way for the community, excepting possibly in the case of certain kinds of building lands. Not the general establishment of Land Courts to make or interfere with bargains between landlords and tenants. But primarily the abolition of dual ownership, and the distribution of the single ownership among many more individuals than at present. For this purpose cheap transfer, and, as its condition, the abolition of what at present renders cheap transfer impossible, intricate tenure and settlement and entail, are essential. But it is not enough to get rid of these obstacles. They are, after all, effects rather than causes; the effects of a system of laws which tends to accumulate political and

social power in the hands of the owners of land. The extension of the county franchise, by taking the custody of the balance of political power out of the hands of the farmer, has dealt a severe blow to the efficacy of this system. But until county government has been placed upon a popular basis it will continue to exist. Every law which tends to confer special political and social privileges upon landlords ought to be altered. Probably it will be found necessary, among other things, to annex to the occupation of land the right to kill game, just as the right to kill hares and rabbits has been annexed to it, as well as to substitute for the existing game laws a proper law of trespass, at the same time introducing the principle of the "Access to Mountains" Bill.

The landlords of the present day are to be pitied in so far as they have to bear the burdens incident to an anomalous position, without being allowed to enjoy its anomalous advantages. While leaving their pecuniary position intact and perhaps improved, we hope to remove at once their special burdens and their special advantages, believing that a beneficial distribution and popularisation of ownership will be the result.

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A change in that feature of the Constitution which is represented by the HOUSE OF LORDS is inevitable, the question being when and how. The standard of general excellence in the House of Commons, as at present composed, appears to me to be by no means so high as to make that House desirable in its present condition as a single chamber. But with the certain infusion of what is ablest and of highest character in the House of Lords, and the no less certain exclusion of what is feeble and bad in it, which would assuredly result to the House of Commons from its abolition, it appears to me that we should be placed in possession of an admirable and satisfactory single chamber system.

Of minor reforms I need not speak. The same general considerations apply to them. Time and opportunity are on our side, and it remains for us to use time and opportunity to the best advantage of the State.

R. B. HALDANE.

J. ALLANSON PICTON, M.P.

THE phrase *New Liberal Programme* would seem to imply a contrast with an older Liberal Programme, either already fulfilled, or now considered inadequate. In that older programme the most important measures, because the richest in consequences, have been free trade, national elementary education, and the successive instalments of parliamentary reform. The purpose of these measures was, and on the whole their practical tendency has been, to produce a greater equality in comfort, in culture, and in political power. The programme of the future should be on the same lines ; only it should go much farther. I do not see how free trade can be pushed much farther without considerable financial reforms. Retrenchment in the hideous extravagance and waste of our military and naval departments

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should be insisted on. I am in favour of a strong navy ; but some trustworthy experts have held that we might with better management maintain for less money a more powerful navy than we at present possess. An even more important financial reform would be an increased taxation of realised wealth, and a fairer apportionment of the "death duties." With such reforms commerce might be made absolutely free, except perhaps in alcohol. At any rate I would push financial reform in the hope of having an absolutely "free breakfast table."

A FARTHER ADVANCE IN NATIONAL EDUCATION is still more important, and this, like the extension of free trade, depends on collateral reforms. School fees should of course be abolished in elementary schools. But this will necessarily involve the partial subjection of denominational schools to managers elected by the ratepayers. The best plan would be to make School Boards universal ; to give them the superintendence of the secular instruction in all denominational schools accepting from the State an equivalent for fees ; to empower them to enforce religious equality in the schools ; but to leave the denominational founders an oppor-

tunity for teaching their own peculiar tenets, as at present, during fixed hours. THE CHURCH QUESTION seems to me closely connected with the subject of education. The idea of a National Church is that it is an institution for fostering the higher life of the nation. The Anglican Church has ample funds for this purpose, but it is hampered with a theology and with formulas not adapted to the times. Those funds cannot well be made more available by appropriating them to any other theology, because even if there were no other objection, the nation is too much divided in opinion on the subject. The fairest course therefore is to divorce those funds from theology altogether, and make them available for the spread of secular culture. On this ground more than any other I advocate the disendowment of the Church. About disestablishment I do not care so much, but I suppose it would be an inevitable consequence.

These reforms will never be completely accomplished until the political power of the masses is better developed and organised. There is no finality in parliamentary reform, and the present stage of it is provokingly imperfect and inconsistent. I would sweep away the

complication of old franchises, and substitute residential manhood suffrage with a short period of qualification, and an easy transfer from one residence to another. Of course no man should have more than one vote.

If I have said nothing of a reform of the Land Laws, of Home Rule for Ireland, of the abolition of hereditary legislators, and other equally necessary measures, it is not that I undervalue them, or would postpone them, but rather because I desired to set forth what I take to be the chief motives of the new Liberal Programme.

J. ALLANSON PICTON.

FRANCIS SEYMOUR STEVENSON,
M.P.

THE object of the Liberal Party is to embody in practical legislation the great principles of Justice, Liberty, and Progress.

In the forefront of its programme it places the reform of the LAND LAWS, and the reform of Local Government, desiring by the first to make the land of England truly accessible to the people of England, and by the second to accord to every capable citizen a direct and equal voice in the management of the affairs of his own neighbourhood.

Its next aim must be the completion of the work of educational reform, and the extension of the principle of RELIGIOUS EQUALITY IN WALES.

The attainment of those ends is at present hindered by the existence of certain obstacles,

which it is incumbent upon the Liberal Party to remove.

It will be necessary to satisfy the reasonable aspirations of the Irish people in such a manner as may not only do no injury to the unity of the Empire, but may perhaps constitute an advance in the direction of Imperial Federation. The Liberal Party will also have to apply itself to the revision and SIMPLIFICATION OF THE LAW RELATING TO PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS; to the task of delegating local business to the local representative bodies it desires to establish; and to the careful consideration of the anomalous position now occupied by THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

FRANCIS SEYMOUR STEVENSON.

EDWARD R. RUSSELL, M.P.

THE need and the duty of the time appear to me to be comprised in remaining faithful to our principles—and therein faithful to our chief and his lieutenants—without betraying or even indulging an undue sensitiveness as to the disunited condition of our party.

1. It remains to be seen how far the prevailing disunion arises

(*a*) from an exaggeration of constitutional punctilio ;

(*b*) from a deep-seated and at length bitterly manifested detestation and mistrust of all Irish nationalism ;

(*c*) from a growing disposition of Whig and Money Moderates to jib at the tendencies of popular progress ; which disposition, will, if it continues effectual, render them virtually and

stolidly Conservative on all questions affecting property and Church ; and

(d) how far from the unconscious influence of personal pique and jealousy, or hasty ambition.

2. It remains to be seen how long "the Unity of the Unionists" can be maintained, and how the constituencies will regard the departures from principle which the Liberal "Unionists" must make to keep up that unity, for which there is no rationale whatever except hostility to the Irish claims.

The ascertaining of these points by the trial of experience will take some time.

That the great Liberal Party, lately so full of clear hope and noble enterprise, should have to consider such matters is an ignoble confession ; but the fact should be faced.

These unsettled points are not merely of curious interest. They suggest the attitude which the Liberal Party ought to adopt : an attitude of vigilance and insistence on advanced ideas. The next session or two will best be spent in efforts to record by Parliamentary votes Liberal opinions on all points of the Radical Programme, whether upon abstract motions or at such opportunities as proposed

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legislation may afford. This will be good tactics, because it will fuse all real Liberals, and the rest we can, or at any rate must, spare. It will give the best cues and basis for popular propaganda. And finally, it will place those true Liberals who have attached overweening importance to their one subject of difficulty, Ireland, in a chastening and wholesome perplexity, again and again, between the Radical convictions which they share with their Liberal constituents, and their Anti-Gladstone, Pro-Salisbury pledges, to which they owe the temporary gracious favour of the Treasury bench and the Primrose League.

On that one subject of difficulty, Ireland, we should adhere to the main aim of satisfying Irish aspirations by a central and national government. Checks and balances and provisions for Imperial Sovereignty should now be open for discussion, which Lord Monck has admirably and hopefully begun. Our faces must be set as flints against Land Purchase at the expense of Great Britain; - and even if desirable public works be favourably proposed in the report of the Royal Commission, we should resist the granting of funds, or even the

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raising of funds, until Ireland is under that responsible Self-Government which is necessary for her regeneration.

As to general questions I offer the following rough analysis, without professing that it is exhaustive :

I. Matters upon which the whole of the *acting* Liberal Party—the party now following Mr. Gladstone—may be expected to be at one :

I. HOME AFFAIRS :

(A.) A simple, searching, complete *Electoral Law*, which will give facility and reality to the lodger franchise, and place the official expenses of the Elections on the public.

(B.) *Land Reform*, in general concurrence with the programme of Mr. Arnold's National Land League, bearing in mind that mere Transfer and Registration Reforms are useless until the law and practice of Settlements are revolutionised.

(C.) *Popular County Government*, upon an entirely representative basis. There must be no admixture of magisterial or other aristocratic authority.

(D.) *Licensing* by elective authorities, with, or involving, popular veto.

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(E.) The provision of *Allotments and Holdings* for agricultural labourers by genuine workable machinery.

(F.) *Economy* in the National Expenditure.

2. FOREIGN AFFAIRS :

A consistent avoidance and censure of a meddlesome and bombastic policy and diplomacy, conveniently known as Jingo.

3. COLONIAL AFFAIRS :

To maintain a lively interest in the real wishes of our Colonies, and to keep all proposals for Federation clear of fanciful and impracticable elements.

II. Matters upon which the whole of the aforesaid *acting* Liberal Party may probably without much difficulty be brought to concur :

1. *Disestablishment in Wales*, and, if effectively demanded, in *Scotland*.

2. *The Abolition of School Fees*.

III. Matters which will have to be considered by the acting Liberal Party, including the leaders :

1. Whether Fees are to be abolished in Voluntary as well as Board Schools by means of a State provision.

2. Whether the popular veto in licensing is to be direct or indirect.

IV. Matters upon which Radicals are agreed, and for which they must work to impregnate the acting Liberal Party at large with their ideas :

1. To obtain such amendments of Agricultural Laws and Mining Royalties as will secure for the farmer and the miner, without any dependence on the generosity of property owners, due reward for, and the utmost facility in employing both Labour and Capital.

2. To enfranchise Leaseholds, and eradicate the injustice attaching to many town tenures of real estate.

3. To promote Religious Equality in general.

4. To make the Popular Veto on Licensing as direct as possible.

5. To make the Allotments and Holdings provisions compulsory.

6. To establish such restrictions of the Hours of Labour as may on inquiry be found judicious.

7. To take away from the Lord-Lieutenants the appointment of justices, and make it a ministerial duty under acknowledged responsibility to Parliament.

V. Matters upon which even Radicals are not agreed, but which some of them may work for :

1. Women Suffrage.

2. The deliberate adoption and announcement by Great Britain of a withdrawal from all negotiations, diplomatic relations, and courses of policy in which she has been in the habit of co-operating as a Great Power, and substituting for this the more sensible practice of the United States in confining policy, diplomacy, and warlike operations to the direct defence of our possessions and interests.

EDWARD R. RUSSELL.

ARTHUR H. D. ACLAND, M.P.

It may be doubted whether Elections are won as a rule mainly through the influence of party programmes and party cries. The importance of the utterances of the recognised leaders is no doubt considerable, but in the long run where seats are doubtful the amount of effective political education and organisation carried on by Liberals is largely influential in turning the scale.

If, as is now often said, the two strong historic political parties will no longer be opposed to one another in future, but the House of Commons will be broken up into rival groups and sections, our present system of government must break down. But if this is not so, and there is little probability of it at present, no third party like the Liberal Unionist Party is likely to be of long continuance. There is a

pertinent passage on this subject in *The Radical Programme* :—

“We have to think not of what might be at Westminster, but of what will be in the constituencies where the only division recognised is that into Liberals and Conservatives, Radicals and Tories. . . . The visionary figment of a third party rests upon no other foundation than the purely hypothetical leaning towards neutrality with which the average Englishman is absurdly credited.”

It is earnestly to be hoped that a means of healing the breach between the two sections of the Liberal Party may be found. But whatever may happen, if there is an essential difference between the principles of, say, the Primrose League on the one hand, and Liberalism on the other, it is important that the difference should be made clear in the constituencies. This work of Political Education, not merely at election time, which is often hard work and which perhaps brings comparatively little distinction, is what will do more [at the next General Election for the Liberal Party than anything else. A FRIEND WRITING TO ME from a town which has been won for Liberals solely by hard work, and kept for Liberals during the last two elections, DESCRIBES THE SYSTEMATIC WAY in which the Liberal Education Committee

meet frequently to consider what literature is to be distributed, to settle what lectures are to be offered to the various wards and the like; and he lays great stress upon the *discussion* which follows the lectures, and which is encouraged as much as possible.

Unfortunately for the progress of Liberalism, what is called Party management and platform oratory often receive much more appreciation and applause than steady-going work of this sort. There are many towns or districts where there is a Liberal seat to be won, or perhaps to be lost, at the next election, in which at the present time almost nothing of this sort is going on.

Meantime there are many voters who are much and perhaps rightly influenced by seeing people work hard for the principles they profess. This is what gives and will give the Primrose League so many advantages. The mass of the Liberal Party are not people of leisure, and they cannot hope to have so much time on hand for political work as Primrose knights and dames.

In advising upon the action of the party in reference to the important questions which

concern Ireland, Disestablishment in Wales, Local Government Reform, and Land Reform (in connection with which the granting of facilities to labourers in villages to become owners of their cottages is even more important than the "Three Acres and a Cow"), Registration, Payment of Returning Officers' Expenses, Reform of the House of Lords, Free Education, Taxation, and other matters, the National Liberal Federation may play an important part. But it is essential that it should really try to get at the opinion of the great bulk of the party, and that it should not merely represent the opinions of a few.

It is often remarked that the desire of notoriety or for place shown by professing Liberals in or out of the House of Commons, who prefer themselves to the measures they advocate, and the not unfrequent profession of Radical sentiments on the platform by men who have little real sympathy for democratic progress, are considerable stumbling-blocks to many Liberals. There is nothing new in this. It has been so before and it will be so again. But much can be done to fight against these things and to promote a true and honourable

feeling of independence in the constituencies. When in most constituencies (as in some already) it is no longer asked about a candidate, "Will he pay his election expenses? Will he subscribe liberally to local institutions and the like?" there may be some improvement. And the more local Liberal organisations genuinely try to develop and bring out every one who will and can help on Liberal propaganda and political education, accepting without jealousy every kind of assistance and giving every willing person something to do, the greater will be the measure of Liberal success.

ARTHUR H. D. ACLAND.

WALTER SHIRLEY, M.P.

I QUITE agree with the majority of our party that, undeterred by the result of the recent General Election, we ought to go on fighting for the principle of a Subordinate Parliament for Ireland as the most likely way of solving a problem otherwise insoluble. We should CONFINE OURSELVES TO THE PRINCIPLE, and no one should be required to pledge himself to any details, or to any particular measure. I do not, however, think that the question of Home Rule ought again to be submitted to the constituencies for several years to come. The intervening period should be spent in EDUCATING AND AGITATING. No kind of sympathy ought to be shown by our party with obstruction, or with any unfair, unparliamentary, or unconstitutional tactics intended to help the cause, and we ought to make it plain to our countrymen that,

while we are willing to allow the Irish people to manage a specified number of their own local matters, we are determined to maintain the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament and the integrity of the British Empire.

The principal subject to which I hope the Liberal Party will direct its attention in the immediate future, is the Law of Elections and Registration, which is in an extremely unsatisfactory state. My opinion is that, unless changes of a thorough and drastic kind are made during the next year or two, we shall be beaten at the next General Election quite independently of the merits of the case on which we go to the country. In particular I would suggest that it should be made the duty of some public authority (say, the Town Clerks in Boroughs and the Clerks of the Peace in Counties) to place duly qualified electors on the Register, and the performance of this duty, accurately and impartially, should be enforced by the severest penalties, not only by fine but even by imprisonment.

WALTER SHIRLEY.

JOHN PAGE HOPPS.

THE first thing to do is to convince Englishmen that Irishmen, in asking for Home Rule, are not marauders but patriots. The average Englishman is really not a bully, and he does not want to be a tyrant. He likes to be generous, to see fair play, and to give people "their rights." That last, indeed, is his favourite phrase. He likes a courageous policy, too, when he is once convinced, and hates niggardly pottering over a concession. If, then, we stick to it, and go on without fear, simply telling the plain truth, and standing by a well-defined policy, without hedging, he will some day wake up and find that England has wronged, insulted, and half-strangled Ireland; that Irishmen are only asking what Englishmen would ask for in similar circumstances, and that Ireland need not and would not be unfriendly if we were only generous and just.

He will then make his mind up with a will, and leave Paddy to mind his own business. But "the Unionists!" Ah, well! a party born in a temper and christened by mistake is hardly likely to come to much. The solid, sober-minded, fair-play-loving Briton will come to see that Mr. Gladstone never meant disunion, and was never a "separatist," but the contrary; that his proposals, in fact, were honest and patriotic efforts to atone for past offences in Ireland, and to win over an impulsive but generous-hearted neighbour to better ways and closer friendship. There is saving efficacy in that view—that a union of hearts is better than a union of handcuffs; and we have only got to push it in every way to make it win.

But the question of Home Rule is not an Irish question only. It is a Welsh question a Scotch question, and an English question, too. We want more Home Rule all round. Parliament is worse than congested; it is being ridiculously strangled: and why? Simply because it is trying to do what it cannot do. The huge steam-hammer, admirable for smoothing and straightening mighty State bars, is engaged in trying to crack, one by one, a mountain of

little nuts ! We are making the mistake that Moses made, in trying to run the Hebrew Government by himself. But wise old Jethro put him up to a better plan. "What is this thing that thou doest to the people ?" he asked ; "why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even ?" (but, with all-night sittings, we do it from evening until morning, that is all the difference !). And Moses told him that everybody came to him with every complaint, and he had to make statutes and laws for them all. Whereupon Jethro said : "The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou and this people that is with thee : for this thing is too heavy for thee : thou art not able to perform it thyself alone." Then he went on to suggest a clever subdivision of work through home rulers, and ended by saying : "And it shall be that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge : so all this people shall go to their places in peace." Surely the shrewd modern Englishman will some day read his Bible, and learn a lesson from this clever old Midian priest !

Passing from the main question, which is, and can only be Ireland—until we have settled it, or it has settled us, the next big job is the House of Lords. The very designation is a gross absurdity in our day. Why a House of *Lords*? Why not a House of Newspaper Proprietors; or a House of Stock and Share Brokers; or a House of Bankers; or a House of Trades Unionists? The best that can be said of it is that a House of Lords is a constitutional survival, come down to us from a time when the lords were the real masters in the nation. The worst that can be said of it is that a House of Lords might, in the course of nature, become a house of obstructive and selfish noodles, and each member of it the

“tenth transmitter of a foolish face.”

In any case, this great Empire has no security whatever that the hereditary peerage shall give us hereditary wisdom, or that the accidents of a certain limited number of births will result in the maintenance of a Chamber which shall be wise and patriotic enough to be trusted with almost supreme power. A House of Lords is a House of individuals, all of one type—irre-

sponsible, unkickable, almost invisible; and that House has the right and the power to resist the declared will of the rest of the Empire! To say that it is absurd is itself absurd. It is not absurd—it is a dangerous anachronism; and a mischievous intrusion of the feudal spirit of the ninth century into the free life of the nineteenth. We hear a good deal of obstruction in the House of Commons, but obstruction there is nothing compared with the obstruction, real or possible, in the House of Lords. Men who misbehave themselves in the one can very soon be disarmed, if the people think they are to blame; but no power on earth can touch a hereditary peer. Yes! there *is* one power that might touch him—the People, convinced that his day is done, and resolved, at all events, that no House of an order shall stand between the people and the law. It would be a tough piece of work, but it could be done.

The Land Question comes next, and here, perhaps, Ireland shows the way. The establishment of land courts for the adjustment of rents in Ireland must unquestionably be called a revolution; but it was a revolution which cannot be localised. Land occupies the same

relation to the nation everywhere, and everywhere it differs of necessity from every other kind of property. It is what the nation stands on, and the nation ought never to have parted with it. It is the one thing that should be at the nation's disposal, to be used for the nation's good. But, failing that, the nation can never give up its right to treat it as an exceptional kind of property. It cannot, for instance, consent to be deer-forested or rack-rented off the face of the earth. Municipalities and country parishes should have very large powers given to them to acquire land for building and agricultural purposes, and for the general good. Entail should come to an end, and the dead hand, as far as possible, be made powerless. Land should be made nearly as easy to buy, to sell, to cut up, and to put together as butter. Why not? Everything that ties up land, or that makes land artificially difficult to get hold of, to sell or transfer, or that makes a man's tenure of it uncertain, to his possible loss, is simply wasteful, for out of the land comes the bulk of our wealth ; and the great bread-winner should be left as free as an athlete. Again why not? All impediments to this are simply the

relics of serfdom, and the dry "remainders" of feudalism. But what we have to watch is, the process of transfer from landlords to the nation or to peasant proprietors. WE MUST SEE TO IT THAT THE NATION IS NOT SOLD AS WELL AS THE LAND. Already the landlord class, the House of Lords, and Lord Salisbury, are professing their willingness to create a class of peasant proprietors, and they might even consent to some scheme of national purchase. They must be watched. Lord Salisbury, deny it as he may, did suggest that the depreciation of rents in Ireland should be made good out of national funds. We must take good care that Lord Salisbury and the landlords do not "unload" at the expense of British taxpayers.

Next comes a re-adjustment of taxation. As I said in my address to the men of South Paddington: "I am in favour of graduated taxation, and especially of a re-adjustment of the income tax and of death duties, with the avowed object of relieving the struggling classes, and making the burden of taxation fall more upon those who are best able to bear it." This is not plunder: it is proportion. It is not even "ransom": it is economy. The sovereign, for

a moment in the hands of the man who is struggling for life, ought to be absolutely free. The sovereign, in the hands of the man who is turning it over in business, ought to be as free as possible. The sovereign, somewhere belonging to the man who "neither toils nor spins," should be seriously considered by the State; but the sovereign of the man who possesses a great deal more than he needs should be an object of the profoundest interest to the national paymaster. In brief, the expenses of the nation should be paid out of its wealth, not out of its poverty, and by its resting, not its struggling classes. Some day England will see that it is unjust and wasteful to tax a man earning £500 a year at the same rate as a man with £5,000 a year; or to tax a man with £5,000 a year at the same rate as a man having £50,000 a year. For my own part, as soon as a man got within sight of £50,000 a year, I would make it not worth his while to go any farther; and I should regard that as excellent national economy, and a most admirable way of keeping the Ten Commandments.

The Church perhaps comes next; but at

present only the Established Churches of Scotland and Wales: the Established Church of England occupying in many respects ground of its own, and requiring separate treatment. But it is very doubtful whether the question of Church Establishments will, for some time either awaken much enthusiasm or do much to help on the unity and strength of the Liberal party. At the same time, the Established Churches of Scotland and Wales are glaring and rather ridiculous anomalies, and if the people of Scotland and Wales wish to move in the matter, English Liberals, win or lose, will have to rally to their support, or submit to another dispensation of Dissident Liberals.

Such, in brief, is the work cut out for Liberals.

JOHN PAGE HOPPS.

BENJAMIN PICKARD, M.P.

I AM in favour of Home Rule for Ireland as expressed in the Bill brought into the House of Commons in the last Parliament by our great leader, the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P., and late Prime Minister of England.

It is the only scheme extant likely to settle our great controversy with Ireland on a basis acceptable to the Irish people and honourable to English statesmen.

In my opinion it will bring in its train peace, contentment, and happiness amongst the people and produce loyalty to the throne and constitution of these realms.

Any proposal for the settlement of the Irish Question short of the proposals of the late Government, will have a tendency to continue strife and strained relations between the various sections of society now at variance in Ireland,

and leave a doubtful political cockpit for political parties this side the Channel.

I hold, therefore, that when and by whom the Irish Question is dealt with it must be generously, satisfactorily, completely, and in perfect accordance with Irish ideas, desires, and aspirations.

The question of Local Taxation and Local Government must receive attention with the object of drastic reform.

Election of members on Local Boards and Boards of Guardians must be so reformed that open voting be discontinued, and the Ballot Act applied in order that causes for intimidation may be avoided.

Dual voting for a candidate for any position, either Local or Imperial, abolished.

Freeholders should have no place as voters in a county constituency. Only occupiers should be allowed a vote in county constituencies.

Any person recording a vote in a borough constituency should not be allowed a vote in the county, neither should a person be allowed a vote in the county whose property was within any borough constituency.

Am in favour of Disestablishment, not merely in Wales, but in England, Scotland, and Wales.

Am in favour of the creation of a large number of peasant proprietors.

Am in favour of County Boards if the representatives thereon are to be nominated and elected by the present Parliamentary electorate.

Am strongly against money being used by any Government out of the taxes of the rate-payers for the benefit of landlords.

I trust these and other important reforms will find a place in your new volume.

BENJAMIN PICKARD.

SIR B. WALTER FOSTER,

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL LIBERAL
FEDERATION.

I.

THERE were no doubt many concurrent causes at work to account for the defeat of 1886. I can only touch upon a few. First of all, I would refer to the shortness of the time allowed for the consideration of the great question, Home Rule for Ireland, on which the issue was taken. The constituencies wanted more time for mastering the subject, and for overcoming the prejudices which have so long existed in the average English mind as regards Ireland. Moreover, the country had not fully recovered from the prolonged political agitation which preceded the election of 1885. In many quarters there, was to be detected a lassitude

consequent on that effort. Men wanted time and rest. This was not so observable among the leaders in the constituencies, as among the mass of voters. The enthusiasm for Mr. Gladstone and his measure in the Associations, was in reality not a correct reflex of the attitude of the whole mass of the party.

But while this contributed not a little to the result, there was a more potent factor still. The Liberal Party for years past has had in it a Whig or Whiggish wing, timid and distrustful of the Radical body. This wing nearly took fright in 1885 over the unauthorised programme, but was dragged up into line, and was eventually carried along with the main body, by the unity of the leaders and the enthusiasm of the mass. It had no clear excuse for desertion last year. To desert his party, a man wants both a material inducement and a plausible reason. In the last election the Whig wing had both. The plausible reason was afforded by the attitude of men like MR. BRIGHT, WHO PROBABLY DID MORE HARM IN THIS ELECTION TO HIS OWN PARTY THAN ANY OTHER SINGLE INDIVIDUAL. • The fact that he had turned against Mr. Gladstone, encouraged numbers who

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were ready to desert, to do so under the shelter of his authority. A preliminary taste of social pressure, and a course of reading in the *Times* and *Daily Telegraph*, had prepared thousands, and they went over with light hearts. They were, moreover, for the most part voters belonging to the propertied classes. Mr. Gladstone's previous legislation for Ireland had alarmed the timid, the unauthorised programme had frightened a few more, and Home Rule completed the panic. All their social surroundings were in sympathy with the propertied classes in Ireland. Their only knowledge of that division of the kingdom was derived from the information supplied by such people; they had no acquaintance with the country themselves, but they had distrust and suspicion of the Irish race. This distrust and suspicion had been engendered by long years of misunderstanding of the Irish problem, strengthened by many wild and injudicious acts of the Irish people and their leaders, both in England, Ireland, and abroad, and now it was excited to the pitch of panic by unreasonable fears, that Irish land would be either confiscated or have to be paid for by the British

tax-payer. THE MAN OF PROPERTY TOOK ALARM, his relatives in Ireland were threatened by the Government proposals, his home and land in England, would be endangered next. It was time, for all people having much to lose, to rally at the call of Mr. Bright and others, and in the cant of the day, to put their country before their party. Thus to the plausible reason was added the material inducement. These conditions affected the country generally. In a few constituencies a small knot of active Radicals also contributed to the defeat by advising abstention and in some cases encouraging desertion.

The fact of the appeal being made on the Irish question alone was also a great advantage to the other side. Men confused by the division among the leaders, whom they had hitherto trusted, and not having before them clearly and distinctly all the great and momentous issues that Liberalism means for them and their children, fell an easy prey to the seducers. In the rural districts this was especially true. The new voter was utterly bewildered, when he heard men, who a few months before had used all their

eloquence in persuading him that he could expect no help from the Tory Party, now equally eloquent in advising him to vote for a Tory candidate. It was too much for the country voter new to the political arena, he could not understand it, and consequently either abstained or seized the opportunity for again winning the favour of the farmer and the squire. Mr. Gladstone's great personality had only a dim and distant historical greatness to the agricultural labourer, and was not a matter of direct personal experience. Can we wonder then that the peasant wavered in his allegiance under conditions so confusing and so new? In spite of all this, the enthusiasm for the leader and the cause among the mass of the people in nearly every constituency, was great enough for victory, if the unstable element, the Whig wing, had not thrown its influence on the other side.

II.

With regard to the Programme I must be brief. It must embrace:—

(1) The Irish question. This can only be

settled satisfactorily and *permanently* by allowing the Irish people to manage their own affairs in their own way, *i.e.* by a Legislative body in Dublin subject to the paramount authority of the Imperial Parliament.

(2) Such reforms of the Land Laws as will make the sale and transfer of land easy and inexpensive, abolish settlements, enfranchise leaseholders, render the position of the tenant more secure, cultivation more profitable to the farmer, and give to the labourer facilities for acquiring a cottage with an allotment or small holding under a local authority empowered to acquire land by compulsory purchase. It is, I believe, in these Land Law reforms, that the Liberal Party will find its most useful programme in the coming struggle.

(3) The reform of the Laws of Election and Registration, by (a) fixing all elections on one day, limiting canvassing, and throwing election expenses on the rates, and (b) by making Registration the duty of a public official, who should be compelled to place on the register every householder as soon as he contributes to the rates, and every lodger after three months' occupation.

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These, with Free Education and popular control of Licenses, form the immediate programme, and conjoined with a scheme of Local Government by popularly elected representative bodies, are a sufficiently heavy task. The Disestablishment of the Church of England and the Abolition of Hereditary Rights to legislate must come later. The time for two chambers is drawing to a close. The House of Commons as at present constituted offers checks enough to hasty legislation. A second chamber composed of Lord Bramwells would not be an improvement in the eyes of the popular representatives. When the question does come up as a practical question, it must therefore be approached rather with the view to abolition, than with the idea of reform. The people grow more and more impatient of these privileges, and when they enter on their practical consideration, neither as regards the Church nor as regards the Hereditary Chamber will it be with a view to mend.

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III.

ORGANISATION.

There are many other questions which appear to me less urgent, but still of great importance, on which I cannot enter. Before I close, however, I should like to say a few words on organisation. Good organisation is essential to victory. This will be provided on a scale of efficiency and extent, hitherto unknown, by the National Liberal Federation. The headquarters will be in London, and the Branch Associations will cover the constituencies. This body will seek to be truly and widely representative of the opinion of the whole Liberal Party, and with London as its centre of official work, it will necessarily be more perfectly freed than heretofore from any of the narrowing influences of a locality or a clique. But over and above this general organisation, there is need of some special organisation, to meet and defeat the influence of the Primrose League. Under that somewhat laughable order there is arrayed a vast force, capable of being used with considerable effect. Ladies of leisure find in its ranks agreeable company, and the easy mission of

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patronising the poor. In the rural districts, numberless vicarages and country houses become Conservative committee-rooms, and the distribution of charity affords a safe opportunity for political propagandism. It is to many politicians of all classes and of all opinions, a matter of extreme regret, that the Church of England has become so closely identified with a political society, and this fact has done more than all the action of the Liberal Party to hasten the time for Disestablishment as a Liberal cry. In the meanwhile, the Party of Progress must have an organisation for its ladies, as a means of enabling them to exert their legitimate influence in favour of the political principles to which they are attached.

B. WALTER FOSTER.

SOME

PRINCIPLES AND SUGGESTIONS.

SOME PRINCIPLES AND SUGGESTIONS.

THE objects of the Liberal are limited only by Possibilities, his faith only by Impossibilities. A Liberal Programme must reflect both the Liberal's objects and his faith. There must be, on the one hand, the natural and practical limitation of Questions, and, on the other hand, and above all, NO UNNATURAL AND PRECIPITATE LIMITATION OF OURSELVES.

The Radical Programme was not a Programme, but a history and statement of a number of Questions which had run wild on the prairie for the last quarter of a century.

Limitations of a Liberal Programme.

There are some indications in this work of selection and government of Questions, which

will entitle it to be called more a programme than the book we have named. There is, for example, an agreement among the contributors to the *New Liberal Programme* that the Liberal Policy of Disestablishment and Disendowment must at the next General Election be strictly brought within the boundaries of Wales. If the people of Scotland show once more a commanding wish for Disestablishment, we must, considering the question itself, along with the loyal and national support which the Liberals of Scotland have given to the Liberal Party, place ourselves loyally and earnestly at their service when their cause again comes into Parliament. And it would seem only to be generous and right that no Liberal Ministry should again oppose themselves to the wishes in this matter of the Scotch Liberals.

But the question of Wales is one to which the Liberal Party must ally itself, openly and completely, in the country and not at some future time, or in Parliament, but now. Wales, with her mountains, language, and history, stands out a nation by herself. In every respect her Church is the nearest existing approach to the late Establishment in Ireland. The Church

does not in Wales count more than one-seventh of the population, and the people are wholly dissenters. There is no reason, either in history or geography, education, population, or popular wishes, that Wales should be identified with England in relation to Disestablishment. Such a policy of identity would follow lamely upon the heels of that national movement which is running round the Welsh mountains, and no Liberal Party can now persist in it.

But there are two questions which we may well stop here and look at for a moment. The NATIONAL MOVEMENTS in Scotland and Wales. So rapid are they likely to grow, that before another year or two we may have from Scotland and Wales a strong, clear-voiced demand from both their peoples to have within their borders National Parliaments of their own. Would it not be as well to let Scotland settle her own Disestablishment question by her own Parliament, and would it not be politic for the Scotch people, instead of making Disestablishment the great question at the next election, to make a National Parliament to meet, say alternately at Edinburgh and Glasgow, the great Scotch question? While the Scotch

Nonconformists gather round their Scotch cause, the English Nonconformists can gather round their cause in Wales.

But there are other limitations of our plans. Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mr. McLaren, Mr. Thomas Burt, have very properly brought before us that old friend the Temperance Question and local option. Are we not right in saying that this question comes under the umbrella of Local Government? And should not all of us who have the Temperance Question at heart direct all our attention, knowledge, and enthusiasm to devise and carry a popular system of local administration?

But there is another kind of limitation which subordinates a greater question to a less, or which selects two or three great questions to run together. The Irish policy of Mr. Gladstone stands out, at this period, with all the proportions and majesty of a mountain in the centre of a group of lofty hills. But I wish to speak here earnestly to the leaders of the Liberal Party, and urge them to beware not to hang too much on the picturesqueness and grandeur of this Irish policy at the next General Election. THE ENGLISH LABOURER IS

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A HUNGRY MAN, AND IRISH LIBERTY MAY NOT
FILL HIS BELLY.

*The Question which should go with the Irish
Question.*

This then brings me to that natural selection of a question which, above all others, could best be put upon the plate of the labourer along with Irish liberty. Such questions as the House of Lords, Electoral Reform, Disestablishment, are not substantial enough for him. Mr. H. P. Cobb, M.P., in this book, has most kindly written a paper on allotments. But if Mr. Cobb will turn to Lord Thurlow's strong and able article, he will find Lord Thurlow say that allotments are no good in any solid and permanent national scheme of land tenure reform to the agricultural labourers. Lord Thurlow is a practical and sagacious man, and I am glad to have him declaring what I have over and over again humbly said. I have known something of the farm labourer. On many a winter's night, when a boy, have I gathered round their log fire our own farm labourers, and covered their faces, furrowed

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like the ploughed fields, with laughter and tears, as they have listened to the story of Robinson Crusoe. And, by the by, have you seen anything more kingly than the face of the peasant of our country when it becomes crowned with age? There is, to my mind, in his slow and rural gait a royal tread and measure beyond that of kings. I humbly dedicate to the service of his cause all the earnest thoughts which I have from a youth upward given to it, and I shall never rest until that cause has triumphed. There is no subject upon which Liberals need more education than the Land Question. We have some three Societies, and some three or four schools of reformers, which have each a programme of their own, but neither of which, it seems to me, have any practical, immediate, and adequate plan for dealing with the present condition of the rural population in relation to the soil.

Mr. Henry George recommends to us as his great remedy that we should tax the land and absorb for the State all the rent. But if you have no cultivators of the land, where is your produce, and where is your rent? The principle

is sound, but it only touches one half of the situation in this country, where probably one fourth of the land is not bringing any economic rent at all. The economic solution of the land question is not one simply of taxation. A people cannot live upon taxes, any more than they can thrive upon ransom.

Dr. Alfred Wallace has propounded a plan, which on the whole is more scientific than any other yet declared, but the Liberal Party has not yet a sufficiently philosophic and commanding mind to carry out such a scheme.

Mr. Arthur Arnold, on the other hand, is the founder and leader of a society—the Free Land League—which it is claimed represents the Liberal Party and Policy towards Land Tenure Reform. It is my humble opinion that it may represent them to-day, but it will not represent them to-morrow. Already Lord Randolph Churchill at Dartford, has swept by promises half of Mr. Arthur Arnold's programme into the Unionist basket. The chairman of the Free Land League is a gentleman of a sagacious and evergrowing mind, in whom I have faith, and he may be able to lead his Society onward to a larger and stronger position; otherwise it will

have a retarding rather than a moving influence upon Land Reform.

This Society started by a public exchange of letters between Mr. John Bright and Mr. Arthur Arnold. Now John Bright has, according to Mr. Chamberlain, completed his programme years ago. But the world has added much to its programme since the great orator finished his. Mr. Cobden very wisely observed, according to his light at the time, that the man who applied Free Trade to land would be a greater statesman than he who would apply it to the produce of land. Were Mr. Cobden alive to-day he would bring back that sentence, and write another. Mr. John Stuart Mill fifteen years ago was the chairman of a society for Land Tenure Reform, which had a much more complete and practical scheme than that of the Free Land League. Mr. Mill's society began with a small and most moderate programme, as we should consider it to-day, but it was found after conference with the leaders of the working classes that they could not support it, and after long and most careful deliberation, a great advance was made. But since Mr. Mill's death there has come upon us a great revolution..

Land has sunk rapidly in value, and the purchase of the land by the State has become a dangerous business, unless it is restricted by sound and severe conditions. Mr. Mill, if he were alive, would in his turn like Mr. Cobden have to put his programme still more towards the future. Both founded their land reform largely on a foundation which has since slipped away—that foundation was the supposed tendency of land to increase in value, and the supposed tendency of land to get purchasers, if it could only be brought into the market.

Here we wish at once to explode a foolish, dangerous, and profound superstition, which has got hold of half the Liberal mind. Unless the Liberal Party sweeps from its mind that big superstition, and advances with a clear head and with all speed into a greater belief, we are lost! Lord Randolph Churchill and the Unionists with their forced marches will be upon us and put us to the rout on this Land Question!

This profound superstition is the notion that cheapening the cost of the legal transfer or conveyance of land; that the abolition of the laws of primogeniture and entail (as they are

called); that giving the labourer facilities for securing allotments and small holdings of land will settle the land question. Now place beside this dream some practical and hard facts. We have in this country acres upon acres of land which no one will or does purchase under the present economic circumstances. Here you have no question of the cost of transfer or the laws of primogeniture and entail,—here you have estates upon estates in the market, which neither peasant nor capitalist can touch, not because of the cost of transfer or of the laws of primogeniture and entail, but because at present land brings no effective return to large capital. While to the peasant who has no capital to cultivate, much less to buy, land, all this prairie of idle acres “in the market,” is a cruel, wicked, and tantalising mirage.

The Land Question in England has now got beyond the reach of any society, such as the Free Land League—which, however, may become useful in many ways, if it will go forward earnestly in the right path—and the Liberal Party as a body must lift this cause with its whole heart into its authorised programme. We must lay hold of some great objects and

principles which will leave Lord Randolph Churchill and his new allies far away behind us. What are some of these objects and principles?

1. That the State shall not purchase the land for the benefit of the landowners, or even for the labourers.

2. That the cost of putting the labourer upon the soil shall be thrown not upon the rates and the citizens, but upon the rents and the landowners.

3. That the State shall not part with any glebe lands or other lands over which it has now full ownership. (Lord Salisbury proposes to sell the glebe lands.)

4. That no mortgages shall be allowed upon the land in future which are not for the purpose of the cultivation and permanent improvement of the soil, and that deeds of mortgage to be valid, must have attached to them a certificate by public authority within twelve months, that (1) the sums borrowed have been duly and properly expended upon the soil, and (2) that the loan is being repaid within a certain time, and is under a certain rate of interest.

This will prevent the peasants being eaten up with debt as in some countries, and it will

clear out the family mortgages of the large owners in the future.

5. (1) No owner of land above [one thousand] acres in the rural districts, and no owner of above one acre within boundaries of towns should be able to will more than nine-tenths of his land, the remaining one-tenth at his decease should fall to the State. (2) On each new inheritance there should be another limitation imposed, so that within a measurable distance the great estates in land should come into the hands of the State, and be distributed among all her children with some degree of equality.

This may be looked upon as a policy of confiscation, but I am ready to defend it as a commanding policy of justice towards the future and the present generation. I have named one thousand acres as a low or high limit, as each may think, to begin with ; but we can commence with estates of five thousand acres, and at a future time gradually extend the process to all the estates which are in the rural districts above a most moderate and economic size.

Agricultural Estates which are well managed and where the labourers are given a certain share of the profits, could be left alone.

It is, in other words, a scheme for a large succession duty on landowners payable in kind, and land instead of money. But we have still to go further.

6. The greatest permanent improvement to the soil is the labourer, and the labourer as an owning cultivator.

There should be a Land Court constituted in every agricultural district, to which among many other functions should be intrusted jurisdiction over all lands out of cultivation and lying idle. It should have power in the name of the State to take possession of such lands, after a reasonable time—say, twelve months, has been allowed to the owner to put such land into cultivation, and he has failed so to do.

The Land Court should then divide one-third [to begin with] of such lands into peasant estates of say five to seven acres, and the State should be ready to advance on a first mortgage of such lands—this first charge to be laid upon the whole of such lands severally and jointly belonging to the owner in the same district—a sum not exceeding one-third the value of such whole estate or (as this is an elastic value according to buyers' and sellers' notions) say what

would come to £10 an acre of the peasant's estate [not of the whole estate]. This sum would be expended by the Land Court in monthly loans to the peasants for the purpose of the cultivation of the land.

The peasants being put in the way to become cultivators on their own account would be able to become purchasers on their own account of their little estates.

The State having created purchasers of idle lands would, on its part, have the right to impose some stringent conditions for its own benefit. There should be compulsory terms of purchase fixed on entry by the Land Court, which purchase should be by instalments riding upon the value of the produce, and subject to the repayment of the loan and interest at 3 per cent., with a thin but increasing State rent, which should be laid perpetually upon the land as a supreme first charge.

It is not possible here, with the time at my command, to go into the defence of Peasant Proprietorship.¹ Lord Salisbury has now

¹ Lord Salisbury said at Newport:—"Nobody thinks it will be possible for the occupants of land in small quantities to succeed where large holders have failed. Agriculture is

given the weight of his great authority (!) to the Peasant Proprietor, and has saved me writing several pages which otherwise would have to be given up to that defence. Unless, however, we should find Lord Salisbury and Lord Randolph Churchill again returning to their old opinions, it might be as well, in one sentence, to observe that the little owner brings more capital to the soil than the large owner, and that he does not like the large owner take the produce from the soil without putting anything into it—which is generally the case with the latter. The inspiring sense of ownership, the intense affection and industry which the peasant owner brings to the soil are a capital upon which no interest is payable or demanded, and the return upon which all goes to him and his children. The land of England has been ruined by the gentleman landowner, the hireling labourer, and the farmer who is sandwiched between them.

a pursuit in which remunerativeness depends upon being able to average bad seasons with good, but this a poor man could not do. You may depend upon it there is no prospect of relief to the working men in this proposal. There is only the prospect of the most ingenious and careful political diminution and corruption, to which, if you retain any of the instincts of free men, you will offer a very firm and unsparing opposition.”

It is not true (Lord Salisbury himself now says so) what Lord Salisbury said at Newport. The peasant over his little acreage has much more command of the soil and the weather than the large holder, who the Lord Salisbury of 1885 stated was better able to strike the averages against bad seasons.

The soil is the foundation of the individual in the State. It is both his political and economic foundation.

The hands which hold the acres will be the hands which hold the laws of the country. If the few own the greater part of the land, the few will own the greater part of the government.

How true is all this found to be if we look back upon our history, or even look into our present position. The land is possessed by a handful of men, this handful of men have become a House of Lords — this House of Lords as hereditary legislators make half our laws in Parliament, and as hereditary magistrates (for they are little more) administer the other half in the country.

Mr. Henry Labouchere in his article tells us that “the total sum expended upon those who have what are termed ‘Ministerial ap-

pointments' is about £160,000, of this £110,000 is absorbed under the present Government by peers and peers' sons. Comment," writes Mr. Labouchere, "is useless." The £110,000 is a sheaf from the harvest-field which the people till and sow with the sweat of their brow, and the aristocracy in idleness reap through our wicked and abominable land system.

We find that from 1797 to 1884 Personalty paid in the shape of Probate Administration and Legacy Duties no less a sum than £217,000,000, from which Realty is wholly exempted.

Real and Personal Property were both included in Pitt's Legacy Bills of 1780, but the Lords rejected the Bill which affected their own estates, and passed only the one which related to Personalty.

The Statute of Westminster, commonly called the Statute De Donis of Edward I., is another supreme illustration of my words, that the owners of the land of the country will be the makers of its laws. It is to this Statute we owe our system of entail; and it was one of the Statutes which has become

law, though it never obtained the consent of the House of Commons.

We have the Corn Laws as another illustration. The first Corn Law, which imposed a duty of 16s. 6*d.* per quarter on the importation of wheat and conferred a bounty of 5s. per quarter upon its exportation, was passed by the Convention Parliament of Charles II. In 1844 it was succeeded by a more outrageous impost, which prohibited foreign corn until the home average reached 80s. per quarter.

The same Parliament abolished all those obligations of public service which had been laid upon the land. The feudal payments in the reign of James I. are stated to have constituted one-half of the entire national revenue. These Land Duties were all repudiated by the owners of the soil, and Excise Duties were put in their place.

The Royal Commissioners on Agriculture in their Report of 1867 stated that "UP TO 1843 SEVEN MILLIONS OF ACRES WERE INCLOSED IN ENGLAND AND WALES."

We may estimate that over ten million acres of land have been inclosed during this century.

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In the United Kingdom there are together 77,799,793 acres of land. We, therefore, have nearly one-seventh of its public and common area annexed by landowners to their private estates since 1800, and a few years beyond 1800.

We have stated that the soil of the United Kingdom belongs little more to the British people than the soil of France belongs to the Englishman.

(a) TWO-THIRDS of the whole of the land of England and Wales belong to 10,207 individuals.

(b) ONE MAN in Scotland owns 1,326,000 acres.

(c) A DOZEN MEN claim one-fourth of all Scotland.

(d) 744 INDIVIDUALS *own* half Ireland.

THESE FIGURES SHOULD BURN IN LETTERS OF FIRE IN EVERY LIBERAL'S MEMORY.

The time has come when this intolerable and humiliating condition of the people in relation to the soil of their own country, must be remedied. We are not going, however, to remedy it by the nation handing to the owners of land a price for what is the nation's. We

will not act unjustly to any man, but we had better be unjust to one individual than to a whole people. We must in our policy take many things into consideration, and not the least is the one which recognises that the happiness of one individual should be just as sacred and inviolable as the happiness of another in the eyes of the State, and in the heart of every good man.

ONE OF THE FIRST STEPS THE LIBERAL PARTY SHOULD TAKE IN THIS LAND QUESTION is to pass through Parliament a measure which shall secure to the nation a new Domesday Book. The plan of such a measure would be simple enough: that no owner shall one year after passing the Act, be able to own, sell, bequeath, convey, or enjoy any lands, the extent and description of which in acreage and situation, mortgages and title are not fully described in the National Record, while such registration should not prejudice the proof of title to such lands, of the nation or any individual other than the sitting owner.

It would be to the interest of the owner to put down all his acres accurately, for any lands not put down the State would claim

as "no man's land." We should thus get a reliable record. With this Domesday Book strapped to the saddle we should be able to go in pursuit of the leviathan of the land, who would see danger ahead as quickly as did the leviathan of the sea centuries ago, and like this monster quietly fossilize into an extinct species.

But there should be instituted without delay as one of the greatest departments of the State, presided over by a minister of Cabinet rank, a State Land Bureau, which should (among other things) present to Parliament annually a report, which should give a return of the (1) distribution of population and land; (2) how many labourers—men, women, children—(i.) dwell, and (ii.) are employed upon each separate estate; (3) the proportion of population to each one hundred acres upon each estate; (4) the total acreage of each estate; (5) the public annual revenues it pays to the State in tithes, taxes, rates, and how much per acre; (6) increase or decrease of population (i.) dwelling, and (ii.) employed upon it; (7) the number of men and women who (i.) own, or (ii.) rent land for the purposes of

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cultivation, upon or within a certain area of soil, &c., &c.

Statistics as to the density and migration of population in and from towns, and in and from the agricultural districts, should be regularly collected and published by this new department. There should be under it a Land Court in each district, whose registrars should furnish the information. These Land Courts should have the administration and protection of waste and common lands in agricultural districts where no large towns are near to furnish a strong enough public body to look after such lands. The Land Court in each district should contain a register of titles of mortgages and a map of the whole economic and legal distribution of the land.

There are two most honest, honourable, and able men—either of whom would make a first-rate President and Secretary of State for such a department—Lord Thurlow and Professor Thorold Rogers. The land, I repeat, is the foundation of the people, and the minister who has charge of that foundation is of more importance in the State than the Home-Secretary, who is the minister of police and justice.

All these proposals look revolutionary, and yet, like many of our reforms, as Professor Freeman has observed, I believe they are simply going back to an earlier and more homely age. In ancient times in England, before the Norman Conquest, the laws of transfer and descent of land were somewhat identical with those now prevailing in Australia. There was also equal division of land upon death amongst the children, and there appears to have been a public register of transfers. The "Folk-land"—the land of the people—was vested in the village communities. We should restore these village communities. Mr. Cobb, I am glad to see, recommends such a policy, but I think the Land Court I have suggested would be best at first.

The policy which I strongly insist upon as that which should be the immediate policy of the Liberal Party is to prevent, with all our united strength, any attempt to apply the principles of Free Trade to land, and not to be in a hurry to release the present landowners [*we do not, of course, refer to the improving landlords*] from the economic ruin which is coming upon them, by putting the State as a purchaser into the market for land which is of

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no value, unless the State by its policy recreates and revives that value. The State (not the landowners) is evidently entitled to receive the value which its policy in the future shall earn for the nation. The landlords have reaped in the past, the State must reap in the future. If the latter, by a far-reaching policy, shall attempt to undo the public and vast mischief which the landowners have inflicted upon the community, and of which they have now become the victims; if the State calls back again the yeomen to the soil and puts the spade into their hands and the seed into their baskets when the fields are deserted, the homesteads in ruins, and the soil choked with weeds; if it changes all this into fruitful plains populated by a happy peasantry, will any landowner who has been the parent of the desolation, dare to come, in the time of rejoicing and harvest and say to the State, "I am the owner of all this; give me compensation—purchase my land—pay me my rent"? Pay him rent for his desolation! compensate him for ruining the country! We will be just and even generous to the poor man, but we must be careful what we are about.

The Liberal Party can never propose to purchase the deserted lands of the landlords after the national rejection of Mr. Gladstone's Irish Land Bill. That rejection must settle our future policy both here and in Ireland. And the Liberal Party cannot even let the proposal of purchase sneak in under the guise of local option, which will give power to village communities controlled by the landlords to make ruinous bargains for the benefit of the owners of land. This is why in the rural districts I proposed the Land Court, which, under a great Minister of State, shall be responsible to Parliament.

Let the Liberal candidate then at the next General Election stand before the peasant, not with primroses in his button-hole nor with promises in his pocket, nor with those little pinches of land between the tips of his fingers—those charitable doles, called allotments, which Lord Thurlow has so smartly pushed aside—let him stand before the peasant as a statesman and as a fellow-citizen, and say, “We Liberals are not going to insult you by offering you allotments, but if you return us

to Parliament we shall bring in measures which shall give to every man among you an ample foundation upon the land which shall be your own, and upon which you will be able to build up yourselves and your families free men and free women and happy and contented citizens of our common country."

Let the State not sink money in the purchase of land but in the purchase of men who shall become the future yeomen of England, the defenders of its soil, and an honourable, high-minded, and well-cultured race.

Shall we sit down and count the cost of producing such a peasantry? It would not cost the State in money one farthing, but it would save for it many millions of pounds annually. It is true that no sensible person would lend money on mortgage at the present time on deserted and idle agricultural land, but the experience of a peasant proprietary all over the world shows conclusively that the peasant and his land are the safest investment for money the State can have. But we require

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to set ourselves against the idea either that the labourer would need to borrow largely or that the State should lend largely to him. The loan to each labourer and on each estate should not exceed at any one time more than £10 an acre—which on five acres means £50. *The Radical Programme* talks of a labourer's cottage which should cost £200. This is the old style of things! This cottage the labourer would build at one-fourth of this sum. In the United States and in our colonies, every one knows that millions of pounds are loaned *for the purposes of cultivation of the soil* to the small freehold farmers by companies who lend at six per cent. and at higher rates, and that these companies large experience has shown to be the safest institutions in the country. Now these companies in their loans generally exclude the value of the buildings and advance up to one-half only of the value of the land. I wish to keep off from the British peasant all companies and private money lenders. I would allow of no mortgage save through the State, and these should be limited to purposes

of cultivation and only be allowed in the first stages of occupation to give the man a fair start.

Let us, in conclusion, in one sentence, look in the direction of the manufacturer. If we were to create a large population in the country producing our food, we should create a large home demand for the manufactures which now go out of the country. Let the Liberal candidate, therefore, who wishes to represent a large manufacturing constituency, turn over the figures which could be presented to show the vast revolution which would take place in our towns, by this vast change in our rural districts. At home the manufacturer would have no protective tariffs to overcome. HE WOULD HAVE A FREE MARKET, A NEAR MARKET, AND A LARGE MARKET FOR HIS GOODS.

Electoral Reform.—After so many struggles before 1832 to 1885 for Electoral Reform, it is not possible that the people will be prepared as yet for another great struggle which should place the franchise on a simple foundation. The vast divorce there is between the population

and the number of the electorate of the country must fill us all with amazement. In the metropolitan area, of a population of nearly four millions, we have an electorate of only half a million, or one-eighth of the number of the people. And the proportion of one-fifth to one-seventh is that which prevails, apparently, outside London. This after all our fighting for sixty years. But no plan of electoral reform would be within call of perfection which was not founded on proportional representation. I have invented myself a scheme which Mr. Stansfeld and others have called "exceedingly ingenious," which should give to every representative elected to the House of Commons a plurality of votes in proportion to the number of votes recorded for him at the poll. For every one hundred votes so recorded he would have one vote in Parliament. A candidate who polled 5000 votes would have 50 votes, and he who secured two thousand, 20 votes. All candidates who received one thousand up to three thousand votes should be qualified to sit in certain portions of the House of Commons allotted to them, and be able to vote

but not to speak upon any question, while only those who polled over three thousand votes should be clothed with all the functions of a representative in the House of Commons. By this system the minority and majority get exactly and scientifically represented in proportion to their numbers, without any of the elaborate and puzzling systems to many minds which have been put forward by Mr. Hare, Mr. Mill, Sir John Lubbock, and others. These schemes, it is confessed by their authors, would not perfectly represent minorities even if put into operation, whereas my own would.

It seems to me that if we throw the cost of elections upon the rates, we could readily protect the ratepayer against too many candidates by requiring that no candidate's legitimate and lawful expenses should be paid, who did not poll a minimum number of votes.

Taxation.—If a progressive income tax be adopted, I should exempt from it all limited liability companies, co-partneries, or firms which being producing and manufacturing undertak-

ings, distribute a certain fixed proportion of profits to their working people. I should prefer to tax incomes by a heavy progressive succession duty than to tax them concurrently with their increase and production. It cannot be too well learnt that the economic progress of society can never be secured by any plans of taxation or methods of ransom ; but that this reform must come through a larger distribution of the soil and of the raw materials of the earth, by which distribution the vast accumulations in a few hands which we have now, would become impossible. The burden of the State, is a burden which should be in the ability of each, equally to bear (unless the man be an imbecile or physically incapable), and each one should resent the humiliation which is involved in maintaining the State on charity, or by the incomes of a class.

There is no doctrine which seems to hold out a hope more delusive and demoralising to the people than this doctrine of ransom, because it would establish the State by the accumulations of the rich, and by the greater degradation of the poor. •

House of Lords.—In defining our policy we must be careful not to commit the Liberal Party to the reform, rather than the abolition, of the House of Lords. Is it not probable that the popular tempest which will gather over this sinful institution will be unable to arrest itself upon any lines which doctrinaires or diplomatists may chalk upon the ground on this side of total abolition? We shall presently have the Unionists, led by Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Randolph Churchill, promising a reform of the House of Lords, and would it do for us to be fighting the Tories with our armies toeing chalk lines drawn between a radical plan of reform and a plan of radical reform of the Upper House?

The people would not care about such niceties.

If you do away with, say, two-thirds of the hereditary character of the House of Lords, how are you to defend the one-third which you have left untouched? If you remove the hereditary feature entirely, what is this but the abolition of the House of Lords?

If you have two Chambers, side by side,

both representative, both elected by the people, what distinction of character, function, and utility would there remain between them to justify the existence of both, under the conditions of our constitution becoming more and more localised by new Parliaments in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland, &c. ?

It appears to me that within the last twelve months the whole view of this question of two Chambers or one has changed. The national movements in Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, are certain to end in freeing the House of Commons of its local government. It is the House of Commons, therefore, and not the House of Lords, which will become the NATURAL Federal Chamber of the future. I have myself now less and less belief in this grand scheme of federation. I think its limits will be confined, for all practical purposes, between England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. Our colonies will not let us interfere with their internal affairs. Every year they are growing more into independent nations. What is the common territory outside their internal affairs upon which any substantial Federal Parliament

can be built? The United States stands away in grand isolation from all foreign affairs and complications; and, it is believed and hoped, that the young British nations will follow the old mother colony in this policy of isolation where it tends towards peace and goodwill among the peoples of the world. The union of the future must be one of British hearts and not of British laws. We must build not on Imperialism but on Liberty—not on Empire but on the nation.

Local Government—should be built on the simplest foundations. “The reformed municipalities are found to work well in communities of every size”—(*Daily News*, in a leading article Nov. 2, 1886)—“from Hedon, in the East Riding, with its 225 houses and 966 people, or Chippenham with its 271 houses and 1,352 inhabitants, up to Liverpool, with 92,307 houses and a population in 1881 of 552,508.” This argument the *Daily News* applied to the reform of Municipal Government in London, but it equally applies to the smallest towns throughout England. Scotland furnishes a

widespread example of Local Government on a municipal and popular basis. It is in these little constitutions we shall find the whole solution of County Government, and not in County Councils.

Free Schools.—We have to consider not so much the responsibility of the parent as the duty of the State to the child. The child is brought into a nation whose miserable economic condition is more the result of the State than of the parent; and if the State makes education compulsory on the poor, it must make the provision of education compulsory on the rich. But we must only suffer this to be as a temporary policy, unsolid as it is unfortunate.

India.—It would be a profoundly unfortunate circumstance, if it should be concluded, because no one of us has mentioned THE GREAT QUESTION OF INDIA in the *New Liberal Programme*, that therefore her people have in our minds and heart, and in the Liberal Policy of the future, but a back and little room, into

which we don't care to enter. On the contrary, we all deeply feel, I am certain, that the Liberal Party will have to take up a great position towards India. First we must get knowledge. This our people can only get by electing native gentlemen from India to our House of Commons. I think that any constituency electing a native of India, should be able to return him in addition to their present proportion of representatives, within certain limits.

ANDREW REID.



THE END.

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